



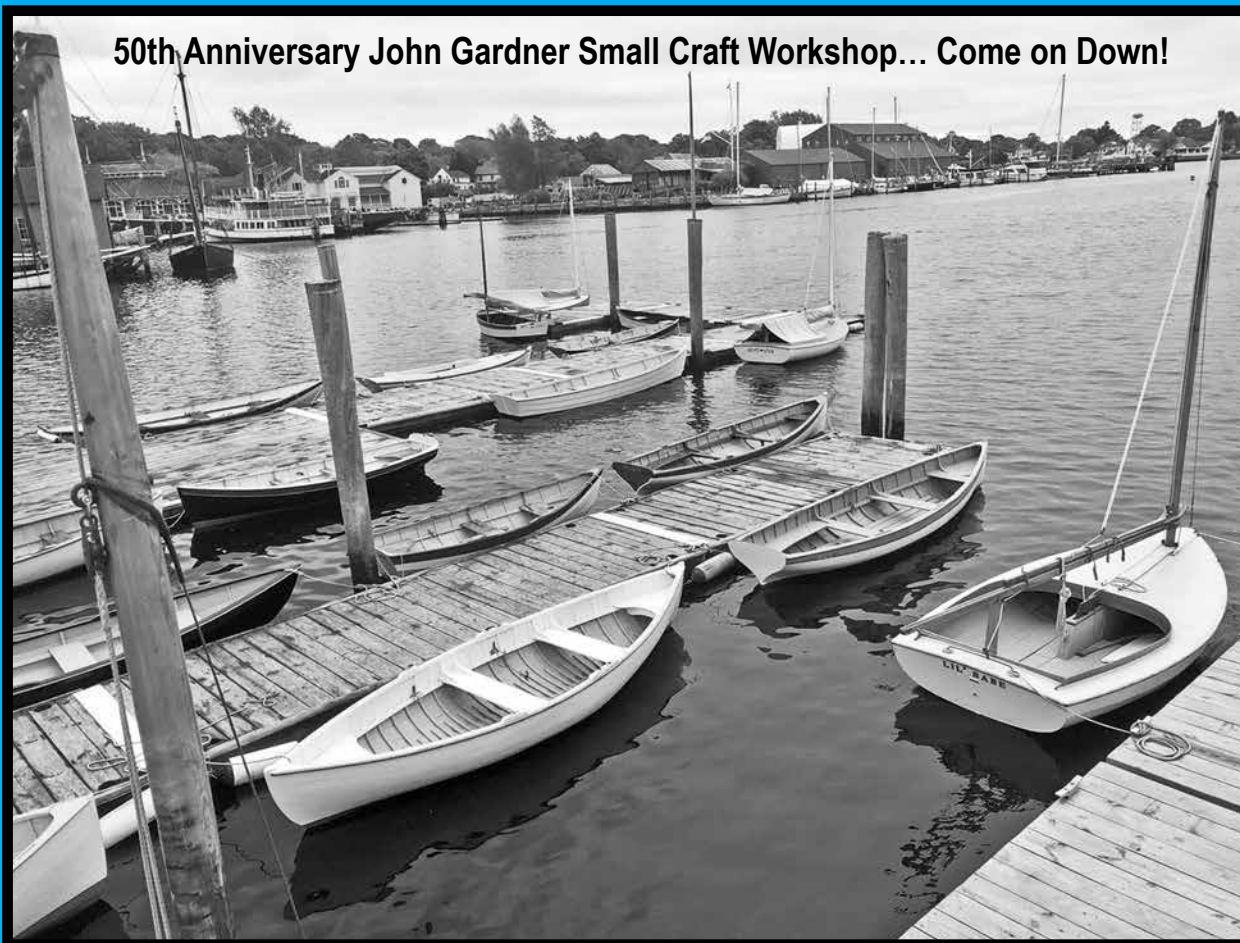
messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 38 – Number 2

June 2020

In This Issue...
Sweet Sue Part II - A Different Sort of Cruise Planning
Cheating Winter - Tidings' Great Adventure Season Part 2
Farewell to Fantastic Featherwind
Building the 13' Peapod in Quarantine
Building Bolger's Newfoundland Part 2

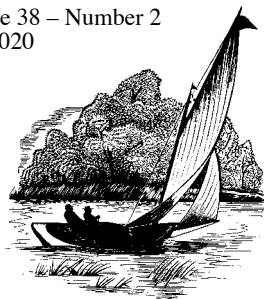
50th Anniversary John Gardner Small Craft Workshop... Come on Down!



messing about in BOATS

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Editor and Publisher: Bob Hicks
Magazine production: Roberta Freeman
For subscription or circulation inquiries or problems, contact:

Jane Hicks at
maib.office@gmail.com

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Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

"First the big picture... As I write this (now on May 3), the national pandemic of corona virus has engulfed our lives..." a whole lot more since I wrote it here a month ago. Our everyday lives are systematically being disrupted with fear of infection and fact of financial ruin. In the light of this overwhelming catastrophe how can I go on about our little hobby and, in particular, the 50th Anniversary John Gardner Small Craft Workshop?

Well, maybe it's pretty minor stuff getting together (horrors) to enjoy a special weekend for small boating. The fact that it would not even be happening were it not for Mystic Seaport Museum choosing the event (now that the WoodenBoat Show has bailed out to later in the summer) to reopen to the public to celebrate a return to the Museum, stating that, "it will be a nice event to get people back together," persuades me we should support it as an opening to get out of this "lockdown."

I have reason myself to want to honor John Gardner and enjoy a good weekend with fellow small boaters. While I never met him one on one, I was at several of the earlier Workshops in his presence at group presentations. This was because of reading his *Dory Book* back in the late 1970s when my interest in boating first surfaced as I approached 50. That led to reading several of his other books and his ongoing monthly column in *National Fisherman* and, by extension, into my launching *Messing About in Boats* in 1983, a move that led to an absorbing and most enjoyable 37 years (and counting still) doing what I most enjoy doing.

So thank you (posthumously) John Gardner, I do look forward to the end of June celebrating his life and work and its results that will be on display there for all who attend to enjoy. I hope to indulge in trying several boats that particularly appeal to me and possibly others that some of you might bring to share. While I will initially follow Bill Rutherford's suggestion on the opposite page to... "pick one for your next build and then cross

the street and pick up a set of plans..." I'll not be following through on that "build" part, too late now, got plenty to do already in my 90s. Of course, there's that Swampscott Dory I thought back then I would like to build that might be tempting...

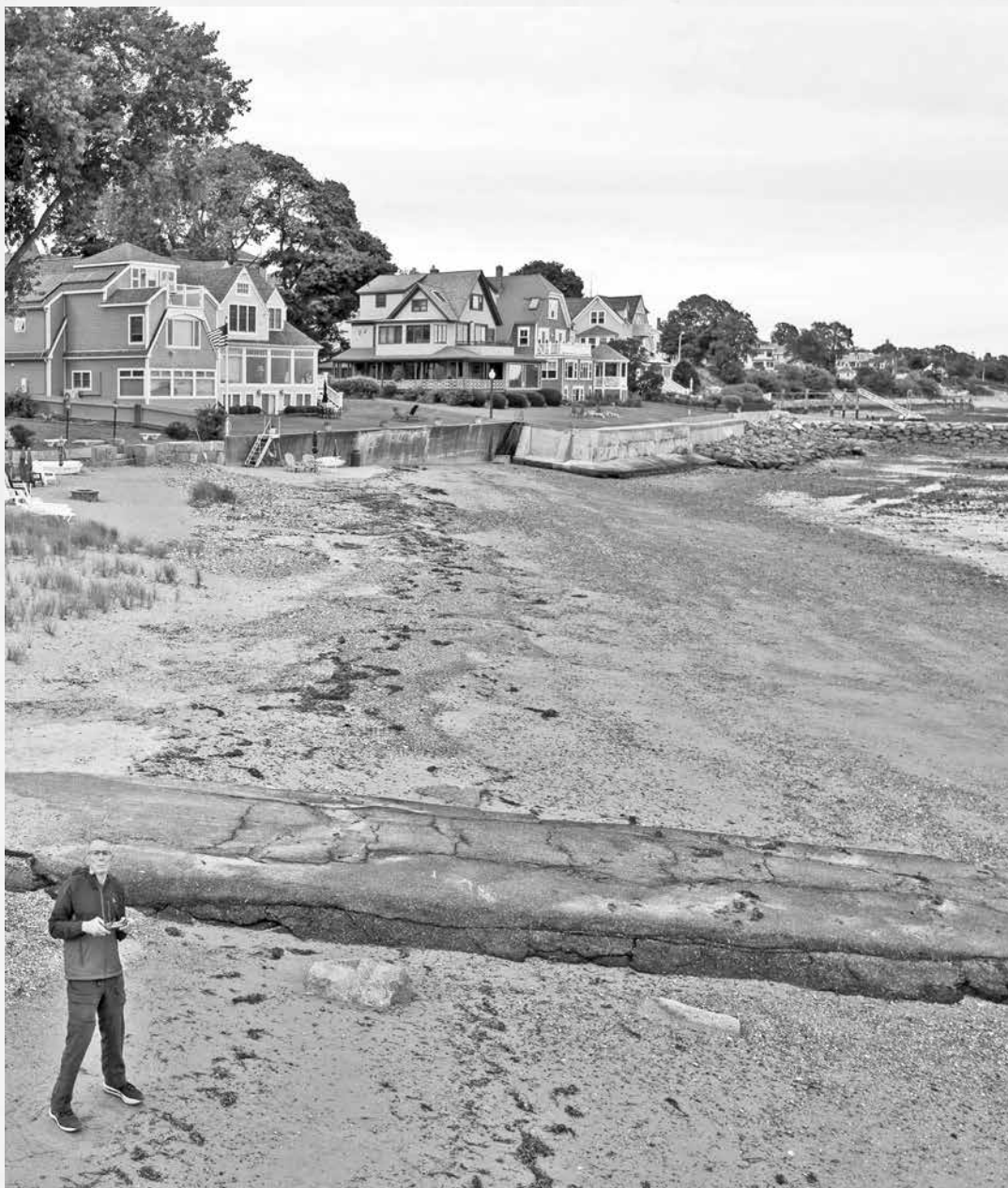
As I understand it, the state of Connecticut will begin to open up opportunities for public group access mid May, so by the end of June those involved in the Workshop effort think it likely they'll be able to hold such an outdoor gathering. You will have to check with the Seaport website (see page 6) as the date comes near to learn if in the intervening two months the pandemic has not abated enough to open up life as usual again.

As I hear and read about all the "stay at home" aggravation foisted upon us to fend off the spread of the virus while our medical science folks try to figure out what to do about it, I cannot but feel a bit smug about our hobby's nature where home is also where many of us can enjoy working on our boats while observing the various "executive orders" emanating from the federal and state governments. From what I hear from some this is actually quite a nice time off to get at the projects dear to their hearts.

Just so you'll know how it is here, we will be continuing to put together our monthly issues "working at home" as we have since 1959 and our printer/printer will be continuing to do their part so you'll continue to see the magazine regularly. April saw a continuance of our very high level of renewals, many with encouraging notes (thank you all for your ongoing support). As I explained in my May "Commentary," our lives continue pretty much as usual as we have had little occasion to sally forth into large gatherings of people so do not feel particularly "locked down." But we certainly will sally forth to attend this 50th Anniversary John Gardner Small Craft Workshop and enjoy sharing the weekend with many of you. "Come on down!"

On the Cover...

"Come on Down," look who's waiting for you, the whole Mystic Seaport rental fleet, free to enjoy at the 50th Anniversary John Gardner Small Craft Workshop, June 26-28. As of this writing on May 3, the Seaport welcomes the event as an opener for summer public outdoor enjoyment (with the WoodenBoat Show now fled to later in the summer). Our final drumbeating appears on pages 6 and 7.



Harkening Back With Harvey

"Small craft images from today as viewed through a long ago lens."

Images by Harvey Petersiel

"On the beach, summer 2020!"



We've Won Our First Classic Boat Award

From Arey's Pond Boatyard

We're honored to announce that *Libellule*, the 24' catboat we launched last summer, has won the Classic Boat Award for Spirit of Tradition Under 40'. This is the first Arey's Pond build to win a Classic Boat Award and the second to be nominated. We could not have won without the outpouring of support from our community and catboat fans across the world. Thank you to everyone who voted for *Libellule*!

Libellule

Libellule, French for dragonfly, is a unique catboat built by Arey's Pond Boat Yard in South Orleans, Massachusetts, on Cape Cod. She is 24' with a cold molded hull and features many custom details. Many of the interior design choices for this vessel came from the necessity of the owner, a chef, to be able to cook onboard. While this catboat is only 24' long, the galley is fully operational, complete with a gimbaled stove with

oven and custom grill, refrigeration, granite countertops and a walnut table.

The exterior has a teak deck and cockpit sole and mahogany staving in the cockpit. The mast, built by Forte Spars, is carbon fiber with a faux wood finish. The boom and gaff are hollow Sitka spruce and were built by Arey's Pond. The build, in its entirety, took about two and a half years with three people working full time.

Libellule has a roomy cockpit which comfortably fits seven people. For overnights and cruises two adults can sleep comfortably, and on cooler evenings the wood stove will keep things cozy. In addition to the luxurious galley and cockpit, she also features a head and a cockpit shower with salt or fresh water options. *Libellule* is perfect for week long sailing cruises up and down the eastern seaboard. She has a mainsail and is rigged with a carbon fiber bowsprit extension that provides the boat with the option of a roller furling jib. The sails were made by Thurston Quantum in Bristol, Rhode Island.



To date, *Libellule* is the largest catboat designed and built by Arey's Pond Boat Yard. This is the first Arey's Pond Catboat with a wheel. From design to launch this has been one of our more rewarding projects due to all of its custom details. In 2019 *Libellule* won Best in Show at the Wooden Boat Show in Mystic, Connecticut.



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John Gardner Small Craft Workshop is On! June 26-28, 2020

Come on down... "it will be a nice event to get people back together."

"The Seaport has requested we keep the June dates for our John Gardner Small Craft Workshop, which will also be the 50th Anniversary of John Gardner's first Small Craft Conference-Rowing Workshop. Keeping our Workshop in June will facilitate launching, allow us more space as well as provide an opportunity for people to celebrate a return to the Museum.

A Caveat

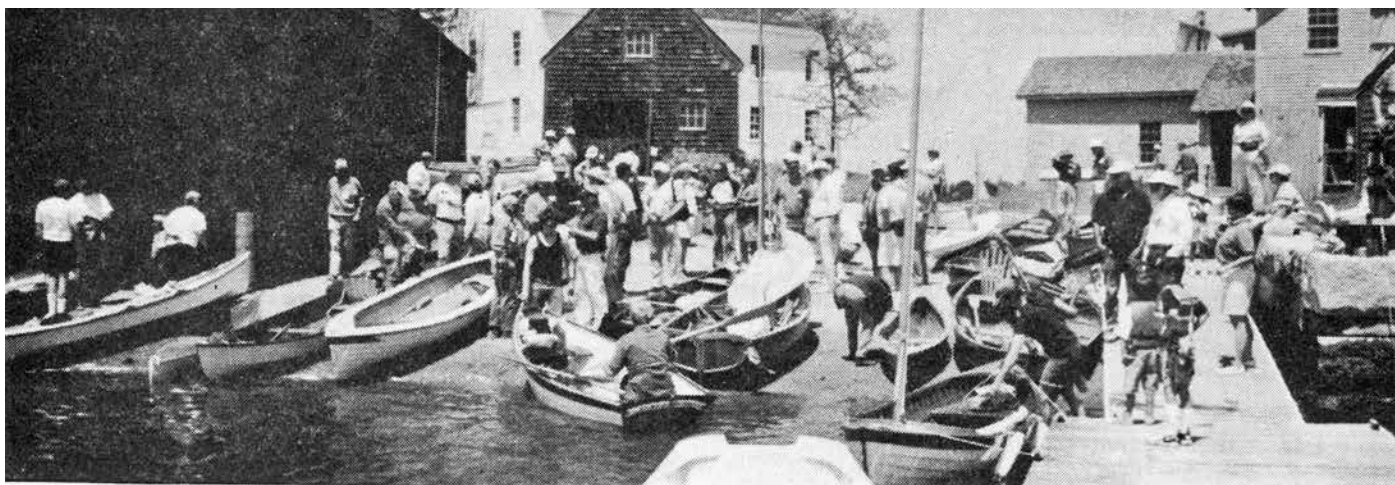
We will be subject to Authority restrictions, of course. Watch the Seaport website for updates:

<https://www.mysticseaport.org/event/small-craft-workshop/>

"Rowing, like walking, is an ancient practice which has lately come under eclipse. Along this coast at one time rowing was nearly as common and as universal as walking. People took rowing and rowboats for granted, and nearly everyone rowed."

—John Gardner





Gathered on Australia Beach 1996.

And Now the 50th Small Craft Workshop

By Bill Rutherford and Andy Wolfe

Portions Excerpted from *The Ash Breeze*, Journal of the Traditional Small Craft Association

So, how do we celebrate this? We are 50 Small Craft Workshops wiser since that inaugural event 50 years ago.

To begin with, back in 1970 Professor Steve Jones rowed to the first workshop up the Mystic River from Noank. His observations in his subsequent book *Backwaters* range across a broad population of small boat types attracted to the event. His viewpoint becomes apparent as one of an experienced small boat guy well beyond early enthusiasm. He will be reprinting the chapter telling that story and will have copies available at the Workshop. We plan to replicate Prof Jones' famous row on Sunday morning, June 28, with all so inclined welcome to participate.

We also plan gatherings of folks and boats, both past and present, to reminisce about events over the decades. Sid Whelan still has his original notes from the first TSCA organizational meeting. Rob Pittaway made it to 23 consecutive Workshops under oar power from Stonington.

Who remembers when the Seaport workboat *Maynard Bray* delivered hot coffee and donuts to the boats and people assembled

Sunday breakfast cruise to Mason's Island 1997.

on the sand spit off Mason's Island on the Sunday morning rows?

We plan a big gam Friday evening with a panel of photos from 1970, like Maynard Bray gingerly entering a skin-on-frame kayak. Bring your own photos to post from past Workshops. We'll watch our kids grow up and see their kids now rowing and paddling around.

Bring those boats from the past! A free hat to the oldest boat. Dawn Miller, supervisor of the Seaport's Boathouse Livery, has gussied up Good Little Skiff *Waldo Howland* in his original bright yellow livery to greet brother and sister Good Little Skiffs. She has issued a "Call to All Good Little Skiffs" to row and sail in company. Pete Culler and Waldo Howland brought their hand drawn and handwritten little brochure expounding on the merits of their "Good Little Skiff" to the first Workshop. The first boat was built and brought to the next Workshop in 1971. Ben Fuller plans on bringing his Good Little Skiff, the one in the photo on the Boat Livery wall of Bill Sauerbrey sailing without a rudder, shifting his weight to come about.

Now for the future. Bring your latest ideas and prognostications. Last year Tom

Clark shared his solar powered Sou'Wester Dory, complete with Li Batteries, solar collectors and Torquedo motor. "How far will she go?" I asked. "To Europe," he replied. How about new materials? U of Maine just 3D printed a 20' powerboat. What is in the future? Send us your ideas to smallcrafter@gmail.com, or better yet, sign up to share your "thought project" with us in a small group presentation.

Once again courtesy of Mystic Seaport Museum, the Boathouse Livery Fleet (see opposite photo) will be available for use by participants free. Come sail and row the most diverse collection of traditional small craft on the planet. Pick one for your next build, then cross the street and pick up a set of plans. Visit the Seaport's Small Craft Hall, filled with over 450 original specimen traditional small craft. We will have guided tours of this collection that are not usually open to the public for participants.

For many more details of what you can expect to experience at this once in a lifetime experience for small craft lovers, go to the Seaport Website listed at the head of the page opposite to page 11 in the May issue of *Messing About in Boats*.



Sweet Sue, Part II

An account of the adventures that befell a Thames skiff on a voyage from London to Oostende, recalled by Patrick Arnold



(Above) Deal seafront today



'Deal In A Storm', by Joseph Mallord William Turner, a painting that reveals the artist's close connection to the town

Reprinted from *Dinghy Cruising*, Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association UK

...The reason for my voyage to Oostende I blame on a graffito scratched on a wall in Rainham Church. In my opinion it is an Italian wool ship of the 14th century. I thought it would be interesting to follow the route of such a ship equipped only with instruments and charts of the day.

However, the firm I worked for was not prepared to give me the time, so the plan was modified to a trip to Oostende, mostly because there was a good ferry service home and I hoped that I could do it in my summer holiday. There was never a dull moment...

Patrick's closing remarks in a talk to Benfleet Y. C.

Day Four — Wednesday 6th June, 1979

I WOKE WITH MOONLIGHT DANCING ON THE WATER illuminating everything with its silvery light. The tide had turned and now flowed south along the coast towards Dover; it was time to get moving. It was a lovely night, warm and gentle, in which rowing was a pleasure. I cannot describe the beauty of moonlight on water, it is an experience that can't be shared, nor is it a picture that can be painted with words.

I passed under the loom of the South Foreland Light and came up to Dover Harbour, which I had no intention of entering in the darkness. I rowed into the foot of the cliffs and let go anchor in about 2 fathoms of water, about 100 feet from the cliff face. There I stayed until dawn, when there was enough light to see the entrance.

Weighing anchor, I moved up to the harbour wall, along which I slowly rowed, pondering how I could get through the entrance without running foul of the continental ferries which were rushing in and out. The problem was solved by a head which stuck itself out of a window of the harbour watchtower and asked if I was coming in. When I yelled 'Yes!', the head told me to hurry up and make for the beach. So I entered Dover, heaving on the oars.

Before I reached the beach, the 'Authorities' had mustered to await my arrival with notebooks at the ready. The customs officer wandered away sadly when I admitted I had only come from Deal. The harbour police were however not so easy to please. It would seem that I had 'held up' three Belgian ferries whilst I entered Dover harbour. I didn't believe it at the time and on reflection I now deem it impossible. However, I must have puzzled the harbour watch; I don't know what sort of 'blip' the *Susannah* throws on a radar screen but I know they couldn't get any response from the radio. I know they tried to call me because the harbour policeman wanted to know my 'number'. I am still laughing about his unthinking question and I still haven't worked out my tonnage so the quarter ton entered in his notebook must stand

for now. The name of the 'master' was easy, as was the name of the 'owner'.

When all the questions were answered and all the notes entered in the book, I was free to go ashore provided I reported to the harbour police when I was ready to leave. I wandered round the town of Dover, but at five in the morning it rivals Pompeii as a centre of clamorous activity. I found myself entering the station of the harbour police soon after six and to my disgust, the morning shift, all bright and fresh, had never heard of me. There followed a long explanation and in the end it was agreed that I would wait until the crew of the harbour launch arrived. The harbour launch had a radio and it would accompany me out of the harbour.

Authority being Authority, it soon got into the swing of things and while searching round for someone else to take the parcel if and when the music stopped, decided that I must make contact with the coastguard. Anything to humour them, I thought. So I found a telephone and phoned the number, another long explanation followed, this time to the coastguard, in which I became a downright liar: of course I had every known navigational aid in my rowing boat; of course, I had a life raft and rockets and flares and just about everything an Atlantic liner carries. I apologised about the lack of radio, but sardonically explained that a rowing boat has limited power supplies. In the end, the 'Authorities' were satisfied that my drowning would be in accordance with the Board of Trade regulations.

I left the police station and returned to sit and wait for the launch. At about 8 o'clock, a small dog came trotting along the beach. When it reached me it stopped, sniffed, and snarled. I considered the dog thoughtfully; I was without question unwashed, but dogs are not normally so fussy.

Suddenly, in the manner beloved by magicians, a small woman appeared beside the dog. The woman and her dog looked at each other and then as a team looked long and hard at me. Their silent examination seemed endless so I said, 'Good morning.'



Dover Western Docks, c.1970



Dover Harbour, 1970s. A huge naval harbour and 'harbour of refuge' was built for the Navy at Dover before WWI

The woman replied for them both: 'Good morning', she said. 'Where are you going?'

'To France,' I said.

Without hesitation she said, 'Can we come?'

If a pig had then flown by I would have wished it well.

I stared at her fish-eyed whilst searching for a diplomatic refusal. To arrive in Calais would be an event but to arrive with a seventy year-old lady and her dog would pass all credibility. I found a gentle way of refusing and she and her dog continued their walk, leaving me wondering what other adventures the old lady had undergone in years gone by.

By 9 o'clock, I was wondering where the harbour launch was hiding itself. By half-past nine I had reballasted the boat using stones from the beach, and at 10 o'clock I rowed for the harbour entrance. The wind was from the South West, force 3 to 4, and the forecast via the telephone service in the police station that morning had been a SW wind later veering NW and moderating. Not an ideal start I thought, but a fine finish. The plans of mice and men...

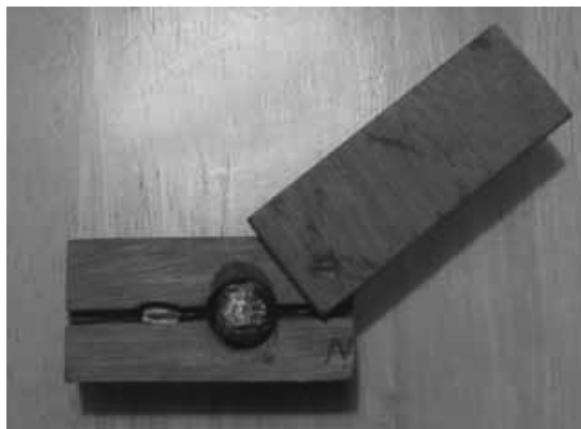
As I rowed towards the Eastern Entrance, a cargo ship came through. The ship was unladen and therefore high in the water. Each blade of its propellor burst into view from below the surface to ponderously revolve and then plunge back, churning the water into a vast area of foam and confusion. I decided I would wait for the launch after all. I hung about in the harbour waiting and watching. The ferries came and went and nobody took any interest in my hanging about. While I waited a new and distracting event took place.

About twenty soldiers appeared on the beach carrying a large wooden punt, the sort of vessel generally known as a landing craft. They tried to carry the punt down the beach just as pall bearers carry a coffin, but after losing step on the steep stony beach, they abandoned all hope and dumped the punt upside down by the water's edge.

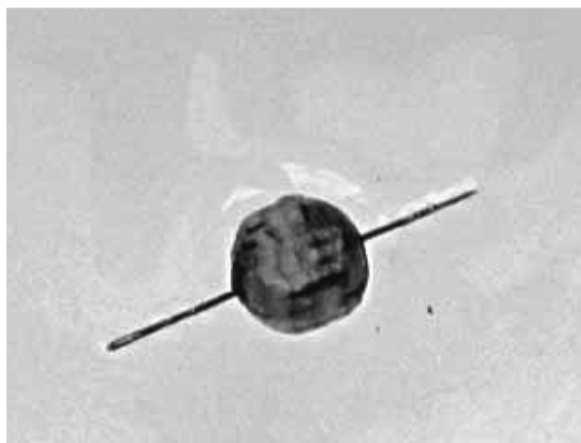
When they gathered in a huddle to earnestly debate something, I had a feeling I was about to witness a comedy. I was not disappointed. After a lot of arm waving, they gathered round the punt and tried to get it the right way up, not by rolling it over but by turning it end for end. After a struggle, they had it balanced

on one end and then lost control. The punt began to topple like a stricken tree and the troops scattered in all directions.

I took off my hat to the builders of that punt, because it bounced on the beach yet stayed together. By good fortune, it was now the right way up. The troops gathered round it, picked it up and to my total amazement, carried it into the water. The men at the bow end were soaked to the armpits and those at the stern were soaked to the knees. At the word of command, they all attempted to scramble into the punt and two men, lurching to their feet when aboard, promptly lost balance in the excitement and fell back overboard. It was at about this point I was able to discern the commanding officer. Although his camouflaged uniform was similar to the others, it was unique in being dry. This happy state of affairs was the result of standing on the beach during the launch and boarding operations.



The compass in its container...



...and in action, floating in water

Just before eleven, two small boats slipped out of the entrance so I set off to emulate their example. To my amazement, the signal for a vessel leaving the harbour was hoisted and thus I left Dover in style.

I rowed north towards St Margarets Cliff, which is the nearest bit of England to France and is also clear of the ferry route. Once I was well clear of the harbour entrance, I set course for France, which was a very easy

matter — I just followed a ferry boat that was rushing off towards the horizon. The wind was on my beam and the seas were moderate. I rowed steadily for an hour and the green fuel tanks under the cliffs in the harbour seemed just as large as when I started. Another hour of rowing and at last the green tanks were smaller. Another bout of rowing was followed by a glance over my shoulder where, to my delight, I could see, low on the horizon, the white cliff of Cap Gris Nez. Things were fine. A ferry boat came from Dover and altered course towards me; she soon overhauled me, and out on the wing of the bridge came the officers. There then followed a one-sided conversation in which it was established that I was on my way to Calais. The *Earl Leofric* then rang up 'full ahead' and with propellers thrashing, went on her way. My thanks went to her master for his interest and concern.

The tide was now setting me southwards towards the Varne lightship, which I estimated was about four miles off my beam when I passed her. The water of the Channel had changed from a muddy grey to a deep clear green. Even though the water had lost its estuary silt, it was still cluttered with plastic bags, cups, cardboard boxes and kitchen rubbish.

The wind slowly began to gain force and the seas became proportionally greater. I had to amend my course from the one which was directional, to the one which would allow my boat to survive. I kept the wind on my beam and cursed the weather forecast because the wind was not veering and it certainly was not moderating. The whole aspect had dramatically changed from bright optimism to impending gloom. The sun was rapidly declining and I had been rowing for seven hours. The muscles in my back were protesting and I was getting tired. The cliffs of France never seemed to get any nearer, and I was very alone.

Then came that blood-chilling snarl of a breaking sea. The wind had gained enough force to push the tops off the waves and suddenly I was sliding down the face of a wave with the water boiling round me. Rapidly, the seas grew in size until they were marching down upon me like green mountains capped with snow. The waves seemed enormous but in truth, I suppose they were not more than eight feet between valley and crest, which is a mere ripple to a supertanker. But I wasn't on a supertanker, I was in a small rowing boat and I was fighting to keep afloat. Each wave, I was convinced, had my name on it. Each one came remorselessly forward to tower above me with literally tons of water cascading down its face.



Calais Ferry Terminal



The famous jellaba, purchased in Fez

The roar of the falling water was terrifying in its potent contempt of me and all mankind.

An hour of waiting for the end passed by in which *Susannah* kept dodging and weaving from valley to crest. I began to relax because in that hour only enough spray to fill a small bucket had come aboard.

My spirits started to revive, the wind had started to ease and over my shoulder I could see a tower above the horizon. I thought it was Calais lighthouse and soon I would be ashore. I was wrong, it was an oil rig, and if I had known then that I was only half way, I think I would have jumped over the side. Away on the cliffs of Cap Gris Nez, the lighthouse started to show its flaring light and in the gathering dusk, I started to cross the northbound lane of the Channel shipping. I remember a very big ship, dark red in colour, with what looked like a palm leaf painted on her funnel. That ship faded majestically away into the distance; I could imagine the crew all warm and well fed and the master casually glancing at a small dot on his radar screen, a dot which was often lost in the shadows thrown by the waves. All very nice, except I was that dot, and with all my heart I wished I was not! I later learnt that it was a ship of the Libyan merchant fleet.

Rowing was now a mechanical operation which seemed as natural as breathing and it seemed that I had always been heaving on an oar. Darkness closed thickly about me and when at last I saw the light of Calais, I was drained of all emotion. If someone had said I had a thousand miles to go, I would have nodded differently. In fact, Calais light was about 10 miles away. The tide turned in my favour and began to carry me towards my goal. Slowly, oh so very slowly, the lights of Calais trickled over the horizon. For some reason I thought I was only

half a mile from the shore but in fact I was about 2 miles — it was an error of judgement that was to compound my later confusion.

The wind rapidly moderated and the sea was only a long rolling swell when I came up to and passed a whistle buoy that also had a light which never seemed to stop blinking. A brightly lit ferry boat swept over the horizon and plunged into the lights of Calais — I couldn't see where it had disappeared. I kept rowing. Then another ferry boat suddenly appeared, coming out of the lights. I stared in horror because she was heading for me. I grabbed my torch and pointed it at her thinking that the world was mad and that to point a 1½-volt torch at a ferry boat was the ultimate stupidity. The ferry boat suddenly turned and set off on a course which I was sure would put her aground, only it didn't.

Fatigue plays strange tricks; I thought I was only a few hundred feet from the shore and was approaching the harbour obliquely. In truth I was two miles away and was squarely off the port. I kept rowing and at last I could make out the shape of buildings. I was close to the shore but I couldn't see the entrance to the harbour; the whole place was like a Christmas tree covered in lights. I gave up and heaved my anchor over the side to find that there was only two fathoms of water. Never before had I appreciated the feelings of the crew of Saint Paul's ship but I too, now 'prayed for the day' (Acts, 27:29). Totally exhausted, I lay on the floor of the boat and went to sleep, not knowing that I would soon experience even more of the adventures of Saint Paul's crew.

Day Five — Thursday 7th June, 1979

I woke up as I was flung across the floor. As I scrambled to my knees, the boat soared upward and I lost my balance and struck my head on the thwart. *Susannah* plummeted downward and a wall of water swept over me. The boat tried to recover but before she could lift, another mountain of water arrived followed by another and yet more. At last, things went quiet and I looked wildly about me for a reason. A few hundred feet away with propellers churning the sea, a Townsend Thoresen ferry shot into Calais. The tide had ebbed while I slept and, when I was floating in about two feet of water, the wash from the ferry had rushed ashore to break right over *Susannah*. Everything was soaked but as I was to discover, my greatest loss was my camera and my film.

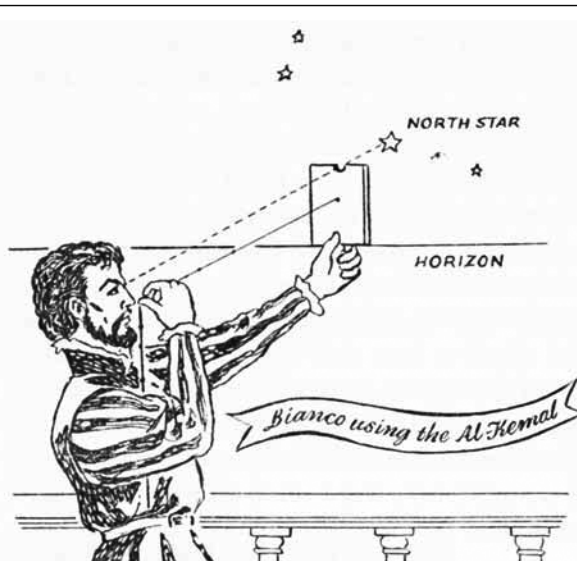
Slowly I started to bail out the water, which was lapping at seat level. Fortunately, it was a dead calm but on the other hand the ignominy of being sunk in a dead calm outside Calais was not easy to live with!

I was soaked and cold, so I decided to risk the wrath of the harbour authorities and to enter the port where the ferry boat had gone. I crept in past the entrance piers and slid past the ferry moored silently by the quayside. Not a soul was to be seen. There was a suspicion of dawn when I made fast to a pontoon in the outer basin. Up the ladder I scrambled, expecting to find a posse waiting for me. The whole place was deserted so I set off to find the Customs. At the ferry terminal, I found two officers who just were not interested in me, and with my broken

(Below) Map of the world drawn by Andrea Bianco, 1436. The British Isles lie just below 10 o'clock, Spain at 9. India at 6 o'clock and China at 3. The detail includes the positions of the Tower of Babel, the land of the headless people, that of Gog and Magog and the Garden of Eden. More importantly, Andrea Bianco was at work about 50 years before the voyage of Christopher Columbus.



Five hundred years before Columbus, Arab seamen were routinely crossing the Indian Ocean and making exact landfalls in Indian ports after sailing for thousands of miles. Undoubtedly they used the Kamal to determine latitude. Below is a fanciful drawing of Bianco using one. Wikipedia gives a concise and clear account of its components and use — and an explanation of how it is still used by some sea kayakers to estimate distance from land. As Polaris is the target star the Kamal is only useful in equatorial latitudes where it is close to the horizon; in higher latitudes the more complex back-staff and cross-staff were used — both based on the same principles — Ed



French and their shattered English. It was agreed that I would go to the Customs House at ten o'clock.

I then wandered into the terminal cafe where I was served coffee and croissant by a chic French lady who must have seen everything this world has to offer. She didn't blink an eyelid but took a saturated bank note from an unshaven, unwashed and saturated 'thing' dressed in the mode of North Africa. It must be an everyday event in Calais to take and spread wet banknotes over the grille of a coffee machine. All this she did without comment or change of expression.

I returned to *Susannah* where she bobbed up and down beside the pontoon, and surveyed the higgledy-piggledy mess of saturated effects that lay within her. I spent an hour spreading my clothes out on the quayside and sorting out ropes and tackle. I decided that the time had come to rest and eat, so I stuffed all my gear into a kitbag and set off to find a room, which I did, in a hotel rejoicing in the name of Hotel de Liverpool. The hotel will never get Egon Ronay approval but it was clean and cheap.

Having established a shore base, I set off to the Customs where, to cut a long story short, I found that they had no wish to examine me, my boat or my passport and that I was free to come and go just as I pleased. I found the indifference of the French authorities in Calais so staggeringly different to the authorities in Dover that I became quite worried that I had been misunderstood. The worry faded away by the time I had had a good meal and a glass of wine. Most of the day was spent sitting watching life in the harbour and the comings and goings of ships. I ate another good meal that evening and went back to the hotel, where I slept like a log.

Day Six — Friday 8th June, 1979

I woke at dawn, rapidly dressed and filled my kitbag with my now dry clothes. Leaving the key of the room in the door as agreed with the landlord, I left the hotel and carried my kitbag down to the harbour. Someone had moved *Susannah* because she had been moored just a little differently from when I had left her. However, all her gear was complete, so it mattered not.

As I prepared the boat for the voyage towards Oostende, a group of French fishermen came down the ladder onto the pontoon. As one of the fishermen started to untie a small dinghy, the others stood and surveyed *Susannah* and me. It wasn't long before they had gathered round and I did my best to explain where I had come from and where I was going. They were suitably impressed with my venture and one begged me to ferry him out to his boat. This was soon arranged and to the cheers of his comrades I transported him to his boat, which was moored out in the basin.

I left Calais just as the southerly tide was at the end of its run. I noted with a wry smile that at low water one can see a wreck lying on the beach almost exactly where in desperation I had let go the anchor so many hours before. Keeping close to the beach, I set off towards Oostende. It was a good day with a good following breeze that



By Régis HOEY id=58481115

The Phare de Walde / Walde lighthouse, as it is now

pushed me along as I settled down to a nice steady rate of easy strokes. The coast of Northern France is a lonely place especially at low water, because the tide retreats to reveal thousands of acres of sand. The loneliness was amplified by a solitary fisherman who was wading at the tide's edge pushing a shrimp net. The first thing to break the monotony of those flat sands was Walde lighthouse. The lighthouse is like a tin box on legs, which rest on piles driven into the sand. The whole structure stands where the spring tide ebbs. I am not sure why the Walde lighthouse was built where it now stands because there is nothing of note to mark; maybe it's one of those mysteries designed to puzzle simple minds like mine.

It seemed that I was upon the little harbour of Gravelines before I had left Calais, but in fact it had taken about four hours to cover the ten miles between the two harbours.

A new power station is being constructed to the east of Gravelines, at least I assume it is a power station because it is big, grim and reeks of functionalism. While I surveyed the power station, a big black cloud slid over the sun and all became cold and grey. The wind, however, held southwesterly and pushed me along towards Dunkirk. I reached the new harbour entrance of Dunkirk at a quarter past eight. The sea was protesting about the new rubble breakwater that projects out into the sea and *Susannah* was jolted severely by the protest.

For some reason, I had always thought Dunkirk was



Gravelines nuclear power station – the seventh largest in the world

a small port which had gained historical fame in 1940, when thousands of men were evacuated from the wrath of the German armies. Dunkirk is now mile upon mile of oil refineries, steel works, chemical plants, and all the related industries of a major port. A few minutes before 10 o'clock, I passed the old harbour entrance, from which a Japanese supertanker was being nudged out into the North Sea by half a dozen bellowing tugs.

The sun appeared again and the day became a beautiful summer day with a warm following breeze and a flat sea covered with dancing ripples. I rowed steadily along the coast from one cluster of buildings to the next and thus I crossed the Belgian frontier without knowing it. The row



of buoys bobbing in the sea I thought belonged to some yacht club and the frontier post I thought was the yacht club building.

On the Belgian side of the border, the coastline is now part of a nature reserve and the sand dunes are devoid of any buildings except the deserted concrete gun emplacements of yesteryear. I had grown used to the rolling sand dunes when suddenly a harbour appeared. At a quarter to two, I shipped my oars off the entrance to the harbour of Nieuport. I crawled aft and stuck the shaft of my tattered ensign into the socket hole of the stern rowlock. The interest of the people on the harbour wall sharpened perceptibly as the wind caught and spread my colours, and the watchers formed an ad hoc committee to welcome me as I scrambled up the ladder onto the quayside. I thanked them and scurried off to the nearest cafe for something to drink which was not as pleasant as I had hoped because my lips had been badly burnt by the sun.

It wasn't long before I was back on the quayside and there I found a member of the harbour authority waiting with a big grin. Harbour authorities are never constant: in England, they are official; in France, they don't care and in Belgium they wanted to know if I needed help. When I explained that I was bound for Oostende, the harbour authority gravely consulted a large silver watch and said I could make it on that tide if I 'got going'. I 'got going' and cleared Nieuport as the controller in the observation tower waved and phoned Oostende to tell them that I was coming.

The row from Nieuport started well, the wind blew steadily and the tide carried me along. I would have liked to make a comment on the shoreline but I never saw it, this is because the whole of it has been built on. Blocks of flats jostle with each other like concrete giants trying to paddle. The whole of the coast between Nieuport and Oostende has been devoured by a staggering building spree and even though many of the flats were empty, even more blocks were being constructed. Tower cranes seemed ten a penny.

The wind slowly died away and the tide had slackened by the time I reached a point halfway between Nieuport and Oostende. Progress passed



(Left and top right) Two views of Oostende



Patrick in Oostende Harbours

from a steady rate of strokes to a slower and stronger pull. The tide turned and the sweat began to flow. From rubble groyne to rubble groyne, I crept towards Oostende. The muscles in my back protested, but I kept pulling, and slowly the harbour grew in size.

Two things will stick in my mind about the approach to Oostende. One is the big building that is a fine landmark for many miles, and the second are the people on the ends of the rubble groynes. For some psychological reason, these people release their sadistic frustrations by heaving lumps of lead tied to bits of string at passing boats. That's how the sea-anglers seemed to me. For, even if the boat is hundreds of feet away, they will still try to score a hit.

It was vital for me to keep out of the running tide, so I tried to sneak round the end of each groyne. The lead throwers made loud protests in Dutch which made life educational and very interesting. I gained the impression that I was too near and that it was considered unsporting just to drop the missiles into a passing boat.

At last I came to Oostende harbour and hoisted my colours. I rowed into the harbour entrance at 6.25pm GMT, which was 129 hours and 25 minutes after leaving St Katherine's Dock. Following the long wall of the harbour, I rowed at last into the yacht basin and there found a landing place just below the North Sea Yacht Club. Did I spring out and nonchalantly moor the

Susannah? No I didn't. I crawled out and found I couldn't tie a knot because my hands were a mess. I struggled with the rope and at last I achieved a passable round turn and two half hitches. *Susannah* and I were there, we had made it!

Suddenly, there were people beside me bursting with questions and wanting to help. I thank them all: the secretary of the North Sea Yacht Club who welcomed me to use the facilities of the Club; 'Skipper' who looked after my boat — and all the others whose names I never knew. My special thanks go to M. & Mme Scouvement who insisted that I slept on their yacht and who looked after me in every way. Last but not least, my thanks to Mr. J. van Popple who had the *Susannah* loaded onto his lorry for shipment to London.

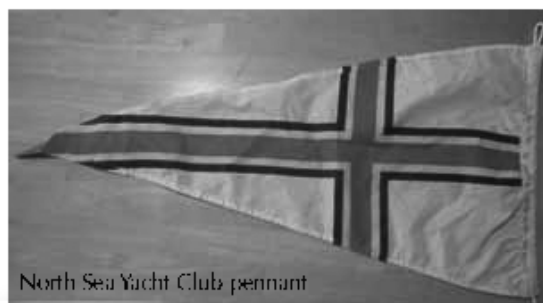
The photographers and reporters of the local newspapers appeared next day and I slowly retold my story wondering how the reporters would present my voyage to their readers. In the afternoon, I suddenly remembered that I hadn't presented my papers to the authorities. I was directed to the Zeevaartpolitie and once I explained what had happened, I was given a big grin and my passport was marked at my insistence by the official entry stamp, backdated to allow for the fact that I had arrived the day before.

I then spent time wandering round the harbour and watching the boats until at last the day came when the local paper rolled off the presses with my story as a front page item. I felt that I had now completed my voyage and it was time to depart, so I said thank you to all my new-found friends and caught the next ferry home.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution was pleased to receive the money from my sponsors. The *Susannah* was delivered to a warehouse in West London, and I spent a weekend rowing her from Putney to her mooring in the River Roach.

There are moments when I look back and remember all the events I have recorded in my little book. Then in my mind I ponder on the possibility of trying for the cross-Channel rowing record. I think if I built a special boat to my own design, and I picked the right day, and if I....

At the end of the voyage I was presented with the pennant of the North Sea Yacht Club, which I keep as a memento of the kindness they showed me. In closing, I would advise anyone who proposes to undertake such a venture to declare that they are going to be sponsored. You are then changed from a demented half-wit into a rational and noble citizen. I did it for the Lifeboats. *Susannah* now hangs in the Tithe Barn Museum of Nostalgia in Upminster (below); she is labelled as the last vessel to leave Rainham Creek. PA



North Sea Yacht Club pennant



25 Years Ago in **MAIB**



On the beach at Wardenick Wells, Exumas.

Cheating Winter

By David & Mindy Bolduc

"Our little boats are small to sail across the Stream,

We bob over waves like corks in the sea and dream of lands unseen,

A deserted beach on some tropical isle or maybe a mangrove creek.

We never will know for the future's untold each day is different you see.

Though tiny and frail to an outsider's eye we're strong enough for the sea,

And that's all you really need to make your landfall safely!"

feet. Matt led the way. We followed. From a hundred yards behind, Mindy and I watched *Paradox*, brightly lit under her masthead light, bob up and down like flotsam in the confused seas. *Paradox* looked more like a child's toy than a real boat, and it made us realize how small we really were.

At daybreak we found ourselves becalmed twenty-five miles out and only half way across the Gulf Stream. Our progress had been hindered by easterly headwinds instead of the predicted beam winds. Exhausted and a bit seasick, Mindy and I decided to motor the rest of the way; but Matt, always the sailing purist, refused our tow. He preferred to sail or to scull. With mixed feelings, we left him behind, making Bimini that afternoon after twenty hours. Matt turned up a day later.

Relieved by his safe arrival, we sat on the dock and took in our tropical surroundings. Coconut trees rocked gently in the cool morning breeze. Pelicans and seagulls sat on pilings preening themselves, while below, tropical fish swam lazily around our boats in the crystal clear water. On the roadside, Bahamian women prepared their stands with souvenirs, while the others braided the tourists' hair to the beat of island music. We relaxed. We soaked in the warmth of the sun. We knew we had cheated winter once more.

By the time Matt had returned from customs, we were entertaining a small number of local and visiting sailors. They were quite interested in our little boats, and Mindy was giving them guided tours,

though only one person at a time. A few people thought we were trying to prove something or set some sort of record, but in reality we were traveling light to fit our budget and our needs. We wanted to sail now while our health was good and our interest in sailing was keen. Most understood our reasons.

Later, Matt guided us up a narrow mangrove creek on the north side of the island to reach a small secluded lake. Protected from the wind by a stand of Casuarina trees and isolated from the town's noisy generators, this anchorage was an ideal site to rest and to await good weather for our trip across the Bahama Bank.

With the arrival of fair winds a few days later, we left for the Berry Islands some seventy-five miles away. That night a full moon lit our way across the shallow banks as we left a luminescent trail of bubbles in our wake. Everything was deathly quiet as the boats ghosted along in the light airs until a lone dolphin broke the silence, surfacing next to *Little Cruiser* and blowing loudly. Then, as suddenly as it had appeared, the dolphin was gone.

The night passed slowly. Mindy and I entertained ourselves with the shortwave radio, and every hour was marked with a call to our friend to compare notes on our progress. By dawn we had reached the shoal waters off the Berry Islands, and in a few more hours we found ourselves a snug anchorage up a mangrove creek on Chub Cay.

The next day the weather was nice, and we left, riding a twenty knot breeze in six foot seas across the New Providence Channel to Nassau. We had an unusually swift passage, and we kept pace with two larger sailboats. After finding a suitable anchorage amongst the local fishing boats in Potter's Cay, we settled in for the night.

In the morning all three of us went ashore in *Paradox*, which now served as our dinghy. On reaching the town landing, a "dockmaster" insisted that we pay him a dollar to watch our boat, and we did. Then, we went off in search of fresh fruits and vegetables at the local market. When we returned, we were surprised to find yet another person watching *Paradox*, and he too wanted to be paid. To avoid being cheated, we jumped aboard *Paradox*..

Chipping the ice off the makeshift plastic shelter, we freed *Little Cruiser* and her groaning trailer from the clutches of winter. It was January, and already there had been several major winter storms in the east. Like snow birds, it was time for Mindy and I to head south.

Our fifteen foot sailboat was crammed full, almost to the point of bursting, with what we hoped would be enough supplies for three month's worth of cruising in the Bahamas. The million and one small details with the house and the boat had finally been completed, and we were both exhausted by our efforts. In anticipation of the fine weather to come, we wore shorts despite the biting cold outside. It was fourteen long hours before we could leave the comfort of our car.

Last winter we had sailed *Little Cruiser* for a month on the west coast of Florida followed by another month's worth of cruising in the Bahamas. This year we were looking forward to sailing with the designer and builder of our boat, Matt Layden. Already he was waiting for us in Key Largo, Florida. While Matt had taken roughly six weeks to sail from Connecticut to Key Largo via the Intracoastal Waterway, we were able to trailer our boat in a single day. Sixty five knots to windward; now that's fast!

We launched *Little Cruiser* at a local boat ramp in Key Largo, and then we spent the rest of the day rigging the boat and admiring Matt's fifth home-built sailboat, *Paradox*. Measuring only thirteen feet, ten inches long and four feet wide, this sharpie was different from ours in that she had no centerboard. Designed for solo sailing, *Paradox's* ease in handling was immediately apparent.

There were only three running lines on the whole boat: One to raise sail, one to reef and one to sheet. What could be easier? Mindy and I were a bit envious since *Little Cruiser* had twice the number of lines. Like our boat, *Paradox* was designed for shallow water cruising as well as for short offshore passages.

The next evening, favorable south winds were predicted, and both boats left Florida bound across the notorious Gulf Stream for Bimini. Out in the ocean, the seas were sloppy and running five to seven

As Matt began sculling us away, this would-be con man put his foot down on our boat to stop us. Matt continued to scull, and soon the fellow found himself in the awkward position of having one foot on land and the other on the boat with an ever widening gap in between the two. Just before he fell into the water, we pulled him aboard. Then to our amazement, he resumed his demands for money as he precariously balanced himself on the foredeck.

In an attempt to regain control, we began rocking *Paradox* from side to side, which forced our unwanted guest to sit down and behave himself. It wasn't long before we had him back on shore. We later called our antics the "Bahamian Deck Roll," in the hopes that should we ever be boarded in the future, the intruder could be dislodged easily by simply rocking the boat.

Having had enough of Nassau, we headed off for Rose Island, dodging double-decked catamarans packed elbow-to-elbow with tourists. At Rose Island, we anchored in a foot of water, and then waited for the tide to fall so that we would be happily aground on our flat bottomed boats. We rested peacefully that night as the other boats in Bottom Harbor rocked steadily in the northerly blow, telltale signs of the bad weather back home.

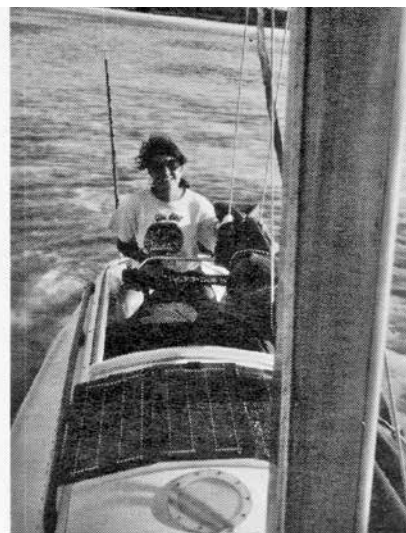
Our next destination was the Exumas, a chain of beautiful islands stretching southward some ninety miles. We first visited Allan's Cay to see the endangered Bahamian Iguanas, and a day later we had fun sailing around a half submerged DC-3 airplane near Norman's Cay. The snow white beaches on Shroud Cay enticed us to linger

a few days longer in the northern Exumas before heading farther south to Hawksbill Cay to explore the ruins of a Loyalist Plantation.

Over the next few weeks, Mindy and I came to appreciate the unique geography of the Exumas. Because the islands were only a few miles apart, easy anchorages were always at hand, and our nine inch draft allowed us to negotiate the shallow waters between the islands and to bump over the ever present sand bars. When the weather became foul, we stayed in the lee of the islands, under conditions Matt called "bathtub sailing".

Continuing southward we next stopped at Warderick Wells, the headquarters of the Exuma Land and Sea Park and a favorite gathering place for cruisers. At the park office, which also includes a nature science center, we passed our time learning about the local fauna and the island's history as well as feeding some small yellow birds called Bananaquits. We had fun luring them onto the palms of our hands with sugar, and it wasn't long before a small flock of these hungry birds were dancing on our finger tips. At the traditional Sunday potluck dinner, Mindy and Matt impressed everyone by baking two delicious breads on *Paradox's* tiny kerosene stove. Many new friends were made that night.

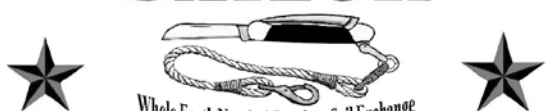
After nearly a week at this wonderful place, we left to explore more of the islands farther south. When we reached Staniel Cay, Matt called home and found out that his girlfriend had decided to join us for two weeks in Georgetown, Great Exuma. The cold weather back home had finally convinced Karen to come.



Time to pump, we're out of fresh water again.

Picking up the pace to meet her on time, we sailed past dozens of deserted white beaches and perfect anchorages over the next sixty miles. When we reached Georgetown, the final destination for hundreds of cruising boats wintering in the Bahamas, we had two days to spare. Karen was fortunate to leave New York on schedule as a snow storm threatened to cancel her flight. After her safe arrival, we spent a few days sailing together around Great Exuma before Mindy and I decided to venture farther offshore to see some of the less visited Out Islands.

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Dave surveys skinny water anchorage at Chubb Cay in the Berry Islands.

Mindy and I chose to visit Long Island first. On the way we noticed how strange it was to be on our own after a month and a half with Matt. It had been reassuring to raft up the two little boats at night, and we had especially enjoyed sharing our evening meals together. When we reached Calabash Bay, Long Island, there were only two other sailboats in the anchorage. We made friends quickly with these cruisers, but it wasn't long before they departed on their own adventures and we left for Rum Cay.

From ten miles away we spotted the prominent hills on this island. Then, as we got closer our attention became focused on the half dozen large shipping containers high on the beaches. This sight reminded us that we were no longer in the placid waters of the Exumas, but in the rough Atlantic Ocean where cargoes are washed off the decks of ships and thrown onto the beaches like driftwood.

Our fears were quickly forgotten, though, as the sounds of music and laughter were heard in the distance. As we approached Port Nelson we could see that a party was in full swing. We landed on a nearby beach to investigate, and we were immediately swarmed by a happy crowd of native party-goers. We felt very honored when we were invited to join the wedding reception we had just interrupted.

During our stay, we made friends with Showertime for Mindy in the Exumas.

many of the islanders. We were given fresh seafood and invited home for lunch. To us this was the Bahamas of yesteryear, the unspoiled paradise that we had dreamed about. Fish, lobster and conch were plentiful. Everyone was friendly. We explored the old plantations, and we went for long walks on the beaches. However, all too soon, it was time for us to leave as we wanted to be back to see Karen before she returned home.

On the way to Georgetown we stopped at Conception Island for a brief visit. We found the island uninhabited except for a fierce population of mosquitoes, no-see-ums, and horseflies, who seemed especially attracted to our red sail. We had planned to anchor in a creek that pierced its rugged interior, but the entrance was obstructed by a rocky bar. After several risky attempts in the surf, we chose a safer anchorage on the west side of the island. In the morning we returned to Calabash Bay, and then we rejoined Matt and Karen in Georgetown the following morning.

After Karen went home, both boats headed north to visit many of the islands in the Exumas that we had missed earlier. One place in particular, Thunderball Cave, amazed us. It was here that we were told by locals some scenes from a James Bond movie were filmed. By swimming through a hole in the side of a small island, Matt led us into a dark cavern lit only by a few rays of sunlight peaking through a hole in

the roof. The cave was both magical and eerie. We explored the other adjoining chambers and watched the colorful fish dart in and out of the many passages. This was probably one of the most incredible diving experiences of the whole trip.

We stopped once more at Shroud Cay, and then we went on to Saddle Cay to visit one of Matt's friends who had a thirty-two foot sharpie which was similar in design to our own boats. Chris and his family had lived aboard *Hogfish* for several years, making the Bahamas their winter home. After several enjoyable days with them, we went on to Ship Channel Cay where we left the beautiful islands of the Exumas behind to visit Spanish Wells, Eleuthera.

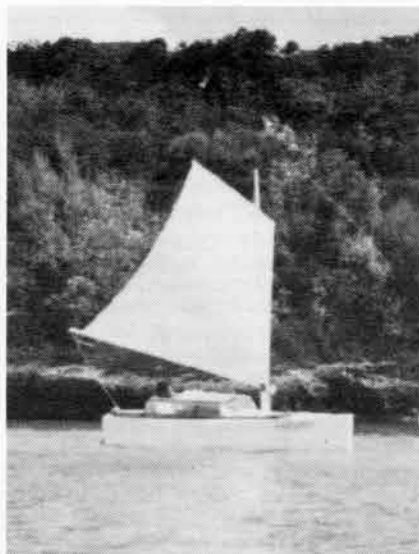
There we met still another of Matt's friends from an earlier voyage. He treated us to a home cooked meal, a welcomed treat after months of our own cooking. It seemed that wherever we went our little boats brought out the best in people. The following day a lady gave Mindy some fresh home-grown tomatoes, while another presented us with hand painted calendars.

It was now the middle of March, and two and a half months had passed. We knew that if Mindy and I were to be home by April, we would have to start heading back to Florida soon. Matt chose to stay longer so he could visit friends in the Abacos. After a brief visit to nearby Royal Island, we parted company. Mindy and I retraced our path to Bimini before safely crossing the Gulf Stream.

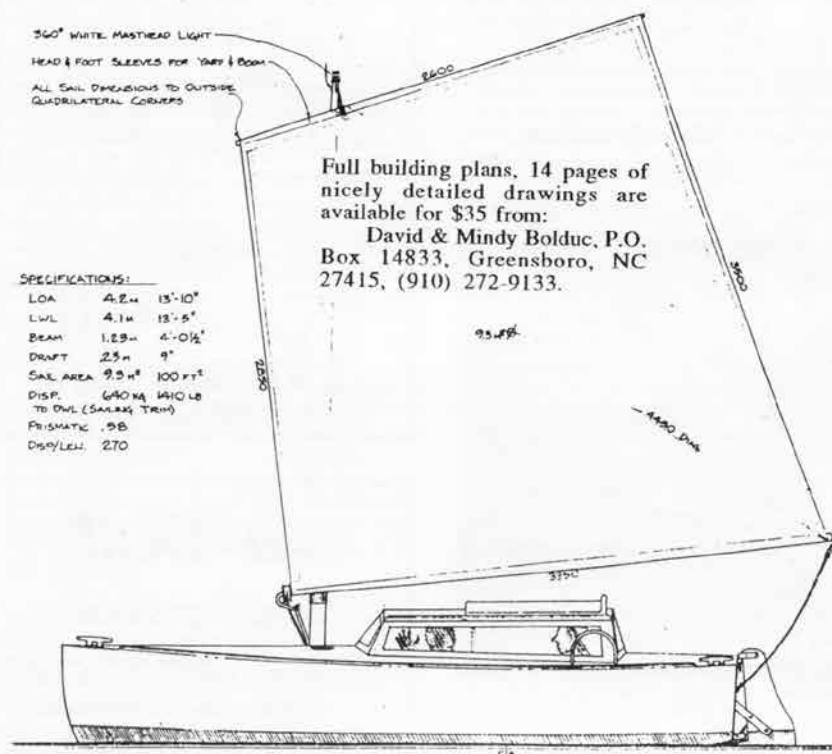
In Key Largo we loaded *Little Cruiser* on the trailer, and headed north following the spring blossoms all the way to North Carolina. By the first week of April, we were home after eight hundred sea miles and eighteen hundred land miles. We were happy to see our friends and family, and they told us of the cold miserable winter we had missed, the worst that they could ever remember. Our dark tans and broad smiles must have conveyed more than anything else the great times we had experienced. It didn't surprise us, therefore, that everyone asked us if we would be returning next year. Who knows? Maybe we'll cheat winter again...

Where next for *Little Cruiser*?





"Paradox" in the Exumas, and under construction in Connecticut.



SAIL PLAN
SCALE 1:20

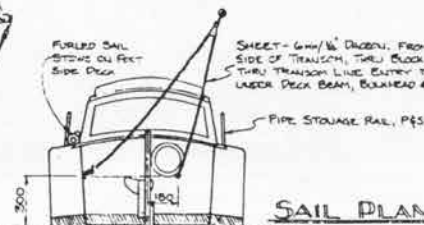
SAD COMMENTARY FROM EXPERIENCE WITH THE PROTOTYPE, THE DESIGNER BELIEVES THIS TO BE A VERY GOOD VESSEL. HOWEVER, NO GUARANTEE IS MADE OR IMPLIED AS TO ITS PERFORMANCE, SAFETY, OR SUITABILITY FOR ANY PARTICULAR PURPOSE. BUILDER AND OWNER ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR RESEARCHING AND STUDYING ALL ASPECTS OF VESSEL DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, EQUIPMENT AND OPERATION, AND FOR CARRYING OUT SAME TO ADEQUATE STANDARDS FOR ITS INTENDED USE. THESE PLANS ARE TO BE REGARDED AS A GUIDE, NOT INTENDED AS A COMPLETE OR COMPREHENSIVE MANUAL.

NOTES: ALL DIMENSIONS IN MILLIMETERS UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. UNLESS IN A METRIC TAPE AND METAL RULE. (TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT!) DO NOT SCALE FROM PLANS (UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY). USE ONLY DIMENSIONS SHOWN, AND MEASURE. MOUNTING PARTS FROM WORK. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE DERIVED FROM 1/4" SCALE LINES AND MODEL, AND FROM PROTOTYPE. MEASUREMENT FROM THOSE SMALLER SCALE DRAWINGS MAY REDUCE ACCURACY.

MATERIALS: CAREFULLY SELECTED A-C EXTERIOR PIR PLYWOOD HAS PROVEN ADEQUATE, BUT MARINE-GRADE PLY MAY PRODUCE A STRONGER, FASTER, LONGER LASTING BOAT. EQUIVALENT THICKNESS: 6mm = 1/4" NOMINAL, 12mm = 1/2", 18mm = 3/4". SEE DWG # 6 FOR SHEET QUANTITIES & LAYOUTS.

SOLID WOOD MAY BE FIR, CYPRESS, LAUREL, MANOVAL, SPRUCE, OR ANY MEDIUM-DENSITY WOOD WITH GOOD GLUING & JOINING CHARACTERISTICS AND GOOD DECAY RESISTANCE. AVOID OAK, TEAK, MAPLE, BIRCH, BEECH. EQUIVALENT COMMONLY AVAILABLE THICKNESSES: 19mm = 1" OR 3/4" NOMINAL, 25mm = 1" NOMINAL, 38mm = 1 1/2" NOMINAL. SELECTED LUMBER YARD FIR IS GOOD IF FAIRLY CLEAR & STRAIGHT. GLUE: EPOXY OR RESORCINOL. RECOMMEND EPOXY SEALING HULL & STRUCTURE INSIDE, AND SEALING OR GLASS SHEATHING OUTSIDE. THOUGH PAINT FINISH WILL BE ADEQUATE FOR A LIGHT-USED BOAT.

HULL FASTENINGS: BRONZE RING NAILS (GRIPFAST, THREADED, ANNUAL, 1/4" JAW, QUANTITIES: 1" x 1/4" 1 LB; 1 1/2" x 1/4" 3 LB; 1 3/4" x 1/4" 2 LB; 2" x 1/4" 2 LB. SPACE NAILS TO 20mm ACCORDING TO PLY THICKNESS. FASTENINGS ARE INTENDED AS PERMANENT BACKUP TO GLUE BONDS, TO LIMIT SPLITTING AND DELAMINATION FROM IMPACT OR AGE.

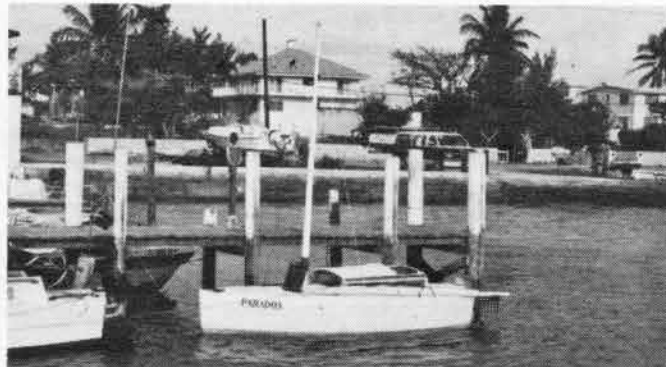
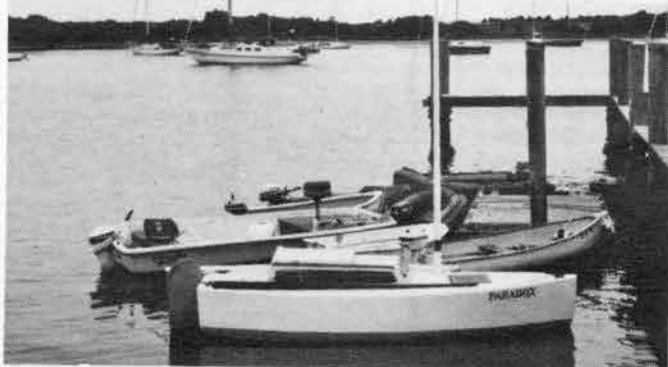


SAIL PLAN
PARADOX

4.2m COASTAL CRUISER

MATT LAYDEN - 7/94 - DWG # 1

On the dinghy docks in Beaufort, NC, and Bimini.



Last year I completed a road trip to scout out Lake Champlain and the Erie Canal for future sailing and cruising treks. I took three days to take a quick look at a large part of Lake Champlain, some interesting spots along the St Lawrence River and Clayton, New York, and the central section of the Erie Canal from Lake Oneida to Rochester, New York.

I covered about 70 miles, south to north, of Lake Champlain, starting on the east shore at Basin Harbor, south of Shelburne, Vermont. I drove south along the Vermont shore, crossed over to New York at Crown Point and stopped at several public launch ramps as I drove north on the west shore. I took the ferry from Plattsburgh to Grand Isle, stayed overnight at the state park and then drove north through North Hero and Isle La Motte, finally heading west back into New York at the Canadian border.

I was not interested in the eastern portion of the Erie Canal, the Mohawk River, much of it is located right next to I-90, the New York Thruway. So I headed west along the US-Canada border and the St Lawrence River and stopped at the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton, New York (which has been on my bucket list for years).

My on the ground research of the Erie Canal started at the Oneida Shores County Park on the west end of Lake Oneida. Between there and Rochester I stopped at one marina and six towns that are scattered along the canal and are very boater friendly. The middle section of the Canal provides access to Lake Cayuga and Seneca Lake via the Cayuga-Seneca Canal if I decide to carry my mast and sail. And access to Lake Ontario and the Thousand Islands is by the Oswego Canal, which is just west of Lake Oneida. While I didn't get any further west than Pittsford on this trip, the western section, from Rochester to Tonawanda, looks like it would also be an interesting area for slow cruising, but without the option of sailing.

Being frugal (that is, cheap), the most encouraging thing I learned during my information gathering was that the fees to use the Erie Canal locks are suspended for this year and maybe even for 2021. The reason is that the Canal is closing earlier and opening later in the season for maintenance and as long as the truncated season is happening, fees will not be collected (at least, that's the policy at the moment). For exact opening and closing dates, you'll have to check with the Canal Corporation.

Part 1. Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and Lower Lake Champlain

Basin Harbor is on the narrower southern end of Lake Champlain, about 20 miles south of Burlington, Vermont. The Basin Harbor Resort was founded by the Beach family in

A Different Sort of Cruise Planning

Reprinted from *The Shallow Water Sailor*

The latest issue carried a lengthy report by member Jerry Culik on his "Road Trip" in 2019 to scout a future cruise including Lake Champlain and the Erie Canal. While he scouted over the road, Jerry's observations on what was to be experienced are detailed and informative and even likely to inspire someone reading it to have a go. So here we bring you excerpts from his report of most direct interest to small boat folks with perhaps a yearning to expand their cruising grounds.

Lake Champlain and Erie Canal Road Trip: May 21-24, 2019

By Jerry Culik

the 1880s and is still operated by them. The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (www.lcmm.org) is located on property that was part of the resort and it is close enough that you can walk to it. The Basin Harbor Resort looked pretty swank, grass airfield and golf course, and supposedly you can tie up your yacht at their docks if you want to go to the museum. The museum has its own small boat dock on North Harbor, on the east side of the resort, and it looked like there were spots to anchor out.

The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum had not opened yet for the season but lots of folks were around. I spoke to the site manager, Kris Jarrett, and the director of the boat shop, Nick Patch (at left in the photo below). It's an impressive museum with a strong community connection, they have a well known and very active "longboat" program that involves high school students and adults building and racing the museum's particular 32' rowing gigs (not sculls). Their boatshop appears to specialize in building traditional designs using modern tools and materials such as 3M 5200 sealant in their lapstrakes (instead of depending on pitch and "swelling up"). The high school students in the area



build one gig a year and they were finishing up this year's project.

I also went down to their dock on North Harbor and chatted with one of the curators of the *Philadelphia II*, a "full size working replica of Benedict Arnold's Lake Champlain gunboat." He told me that even the cannons work (but they don't load projectiles). The photo at bottom left shows the *Philadelphia* at the end of their dock on North Harbor with a bunch of their rowing gigs, their spring regatta had happened the previous weekend.

The view in the photo is to the northwest with New York not far away on the opposite shore. Button Bay State Park is just south of the museum but it appeared to be closed. On Google Earth it does look like a nice park and it has camping (<https://vtstateparks.com/buttonbay.html>).

There is a public launch ramp onto Button Bay about a mile and a half south of the museum. Overall, this area looked like a good spot on the Vermont side with access to the lake and it had plenty of services nearby at the museum, state park and resort.

From Basin Harbor I headed south on Rt 17 to Crown Point, the site of an early French (and a later British) fort that were built to control traffic along Lake Champlain and the Hudson Valley. The fort grounds were pretty deserted. It had become really windy and whitecaps developed out on the lake. In the photo below right, looking north past the remains of the British fort's parapet, scarp and solid stone counterscarp you can see how narrow the Lake is at Crown Point, Vermont is just across the water on the right side.

My first stop in New York along Rt 9N was the Port Henry launch ramp which has a huge parking lot and bathrooms. There is also a marina nearby and also a town campground. The next town north is Westport and they also have a very nice launch ramp with bathrooms but less parking than Port Henry and more isolated from the town and services. I briefly looked around Essex (where one of the car ferries to Vermont operates from) but didn't find a public ramp, although there were several marinas and the town had plenty of stores and eateries near the water.

My last scouting stop was the Willsboro boat launch ramp (photo top left opposite, looking south). The ramp has a very large parking lot and is located on a back bay that has protection from every direction except north. The ramp is about four miles south of Willsboro Point and the open lake. Schuyler Island is about three miles north of Willsboro Point.

It was very windy and coming right out of the northwest as I watched a large sailboat at the Willsboro Bay Marina try to pick up a mooring. I would not be as cool and calm if





I was out on the water that day. It looks like walking to the marina from the ramp would involve a good hike along the roads and there are no other services nearby.

In summary, each of the launch ramps in New York that I stopped at had restrooms and it did not look like any launch permit was required at any of them. I did not see any restriction on overnight parking but it looked like camping overnight was not permitted anywhere. Most of them had services, stores and restaurants and even B&Bs not far away.

After I left Willsboro I continued north along the west shore. I got into Plattsburgh mid afternoon and was the last vehicle that loaded on the ferry to Grand Isle. It was windy on the lake but we were headed downwind for most of the trip and it was quite comfortable until we started docking maneuvers.

I've read that Valcor Island, just south of Cumberland Head, is a great place to visit. It's part of the Adirondack Forest Preserve and has at least five anchorages, hiking trails and free primitive camping but no facilities. Here's a link to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation, which manages Valcor, Garden, Schuyler, Cole, Sheephead and Signal Buoy islands and the Peru, Port Douglas, Willsboro Bay and Westport boat ramps: www.dec.ny.gov/lands/105779.html.

Part 2. Upper Lake Champlain and the Antique Boat Museum

The next morning I departed from Grand Isle State Park and headed north on Rt 2. I had to wait a bit because the drawbridge between Grand Isle and N Hero Island was being worked on. On Rt 125 to Isle La Motte I stopped at the St Anne Shrine (photo top right). To the west is New York, not far away, it was still blowing pretty good and the water was very high.

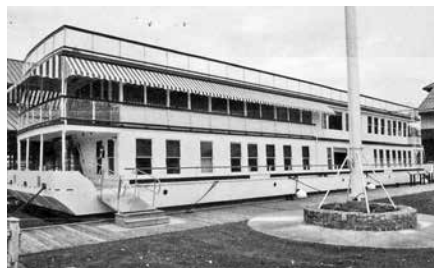
I continued back into New York. There were several marinas in Rouses Point but I didn't stop at any of them. The next town launch ramp was about five miles south at Great Chazy. Point Au Roche State Park is a about a half mile further south.

Lake Champlain Summary: New York seems to be more boater friendly than Vermont. For gunkholing, I think that the best bet for finding launch ramps and facilities on the Vermont side of Lake Champlain are the state parks, of which there are several; Grand Isle, North Hero and Kill Kare and Burton Island. There is "primitive camping" on Knight Island and Woods Island, no facilities. These last three state parks are near St Albans, 20 miles north of Burlington and 40 miles north of Button Bay.

Meanwhile, once back into New York I meandered west on routes which parallel the St Lawrence River and eventually south to the Antique Boat Museum (www.abm.org) in Clayton, New York.

From the ABM website: "... a group concerned with preserving the area's rich boating heritage formed the Antique Boat Auxiliary and organized a show of antique boats in 1965. The boat show became an annual event and grew steadily in size. Under the auspices of the Antique Boat Auxiliary, a small group of supporters acquired several parcels of waterfront property in the early 1970s and established a permanent museum to host the annual boat show" The Antique & Classic Boat Society (www.acbs.org) is now the outfit that runs the annual boat show in Clayton.

The "crown jewel" of the museum is a massive two story houseboat named *La Duchesse* that was built and owned by George C. Boldt, who also owned the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York City at the turn of the 20th century. Andrew McNally (of Rand-McNally) bought it from E.J. Noble (of LifeSaver fame and fortune), restored it and used it at his estate on Wellesley Island. He eventually donated it to the museum as representative of the boats built during the Gilded Age and used to entertain and transport friends and family (www.boldtcastle.wordpress.com/stories/la-duchesse). The museum has a huge closeable "boathouse" for the houseboat so they could store it out of the winter weather.



Each of their buildings (all new construction!) is named after some notable person related to the development or restoration (or duplication) of the original wood "motor boats" that opened up the Thousand Islands to serious recreation; Bolling Haxall (early chairman of the museum), Noble, McNally, Cleveland E. Dodge of Phelps Dodge and Dodge Fibers, not the automobile Dodge, and William "Bill" Morgan, who jump started the collection and showing of wooden power and race boats and who made a business in the '70s and '80s of restoring and building incredibly beautiful and expensive replicas of Hacker racing boats when there were no more wrecks around that were worth restoring.

In addition to the two story barge houseboat and lots of expensive looking wooden powerboats, there was a very nice exhibit of canoes that was put together with the Wooden Canoe Heritage Society.



The real stars of this museum are rare, functional wooden power and racing boats from the first half of the 20th century; Hacker, Gar Wood, Lyons, Elco, Dodge and even mass produced Chris-Crafts. There was a LOT more mahogany and some cedar to marvel at.

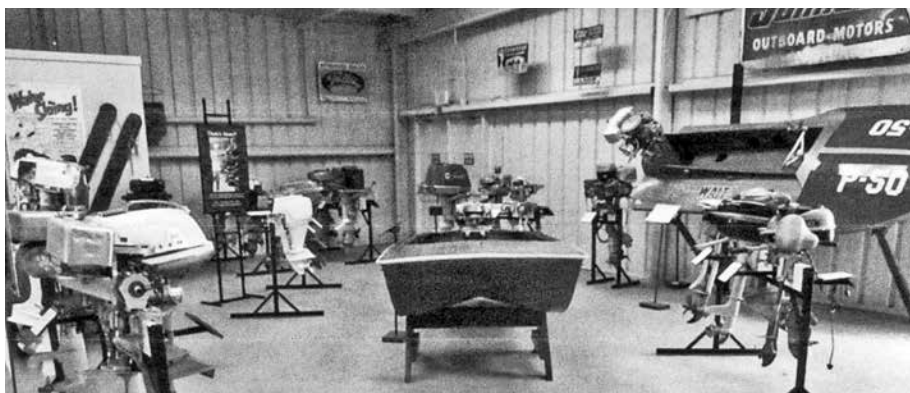


There were a large number of old outboard motors on display, all kept in their original condition. They were very common around the Great Lakes and the Midwest, where they were built and modified. The racing outboards were especially well done. The photo top left on next page shows only some of the motors that were displayed. The boat in the center of the photo is an original Hickman Sea Sled, a very unique and early tunnel hull design. The outboard in the back is the first (and nearly only) diesel outboard!

The ABM focuses on old wooden boats with motors, race boats or luxury yachts. And there are a few sail or paddle powered boats that are unique to the Thousand Islands or the Adirondacks, canoes, guideboats and skiffs, that were used for "pleasure," recreational fishing or maybe courting. All of the boats at ABM were built for or used by people with lots of money and who spent some of it on beautiful boats.

Part 3. Erie Canal

From Clayton I drove cross country on to Brewerton, which is at the west end of Oneida Lake and the eastern terminus of the section of



the Erie Canal that ends near Buffalo. Unlike the Finger Lakes that run north south, Oneida Lake runs east west and comprises about 20 miles of the Erie Canal. The lake is about five miles wide, north to south, so it's a respectable piece of cruiseable and sailable fresh water in the middle of New York.

After crossing the Erie Canal in Brewerton, I headed to Oneida Shores County Park to see if it would be a good launch site. The launch ramp was busy with high power fishing boats, even though it was windy and mid week. The camping area was a little wet from the recent rain but they were already open for business.

When asked about trailer storage at the park if I took my boat out onto the Canal, the toll booth guy told me that they didn't let trailers park overnight anymore. But he did give me the names of several nearby marinas. The best of the bunch seemed to be 43° North Marina (www.43northmarina.com). I spoke to the manager about leaving the trailer and she said that they have a ramp and would charge \$25 for gated storage of my boat trailer for a week (or two?).

My goal for the rest of the day was to head west toward Rochester to investigate several small towns that are located along the Erie Canal, scouting for a future cruise. I found out that there are no tolls on any of the New York canals this year. From the Canal Corporation (www.canals.ny.gov) website, "Tolls and fees for recreational vessels on the New York State Canal System have been waived through 2021."

In Brewerton I looked around for information on the Canal (but didn't find any, here is a link to the NPS Map & Guide, www.eriecanalway.org/application/files/6614/5399/9658/ECNHC_MapGuide_2015_final.pdf). I headed out to Clyde. In the area called Horseshoe Island I spotted a sign for "Pirates Cove Marina" (www.piratescovemarina.com) and pulled in to check it out. I spoke to the owner who gave me information on the Canal. She also introduced me to her husband, Paul, a wooden boat restoration guru (but they were busy getting ready for the holiday weekend

and I didn't have a chance to talk to him). Their marina is very neat, there is a nice little cafe there and it has a park like setting.

Just west of Pirates Cove the Seneca and Oswego rivers join the Canal at the "Three Rivers." The Seneca River leg heads south and is the continuation of the Canal west and you can peel off and go to Onondaga Lake (and Syracuse). The Oswego River leg heads north to Lake Ontario. If you head back east from Pirates Cove on the Oneida River there is one lock, Lock 23, between you and Oneida Lake.

Lock 24 is at Baldwinsville, about two miles northwest of Onondaga Lake. On Google Earth it looks like there is a small town dock on the north side of the canal, just downstream from the lock. Lock 25 is just west of Montezuma, site of the Richmond Aqueduct, the Heritage Park and a National Wildlife Refuge (www.montezumahistoricalsociety.org). There is also a spur canal south to Lake Cayuga and then west through Seneca Falls and Waterloo to Seneca Lake. There are launch ramps on Lake Cayuga and Seneca Lake (www.dec.ny.gov/docs/fish_marine_pdf/nyboatlaunching.pdf).

But the Erie Canal here heads north to Clyde, the first and easternmost town that I stopped at, 40 miles as the crow flies and about 60 miles by canal from Brewerton. Lock 26 is about 1½ miles east of the town. Clyde was the most rural of the canal towns that I visited and there wasn't a lot to see, although there was plenty of space to dock and clean bathrooms. There was a town map nearby that showed where the town offices and stores were located. In general the facilities at the town landings on this end of the canal were more than adequate for an overnight stop (but no showers). The closer I got to Rochester (heading west), the fancier the town landings became with more facilities like showers and laundry facilities. But you will pay for them.

Heading west, the next canal town that I stopped at is Lyons, ten canal miles from Clyde. Lock 27 is at the west end of town. The photo below left is looking east. The

actual town of Lyons (on the left side of the photo) is on the north side of the canal and the area near the canal looks a little rundown. Dockage is next to the firehouse, near the bridge in the photo, and there is more dockage at a small park on the south side. Fast food is a short walk away. Camping? Sign in at the firehouse. Heading west on Rt 31, Lock 28A is about a half mile west of town and on Google Earth it looks like the Canal Corporation also has a drydock there.

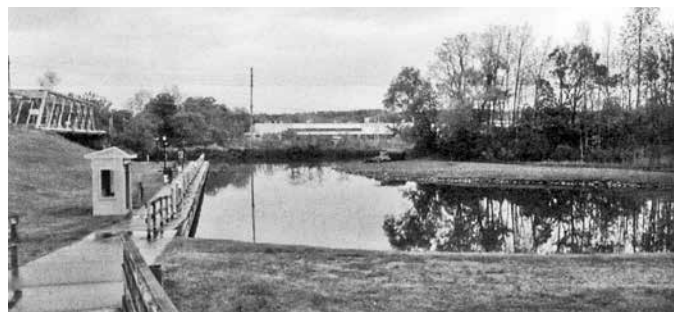
Just downstream from the lock is the Canandaigua Outlet. And while Seneca Lake is only about ten miles south of Lyons, access to it is through Cayuga Lake. Lake Canandaigua is about 15 miles west of Seneca Lake, and the First Creek winds a long way before you finally get to Canandaigua, maybe an interesting route for a kayak or rowing boat. But there is only one town park along the way, in Shortsville. The rest is all private property.

Newark is about six canal miles west of Lyons and Lock 28B is just to the east as you enter town. Newark is a much bigger than the first two towns and on Google Earth the canal landing looks more upscale. There is dockage on both sides of the canal. Shops and restaurants are nearby and there is even a motel just across the street from the landing.

From the boater friendly Chamber of Commerce info, "During your stay, you are our guest. There's no docking fee or any charge for using our clean comfort facilities, washer/dryer or pumpout. All we ask is that you support our local merchants" (www.newarknycchamber.org). Newark is clearly high on the must stop list, far enough from Rochester and Brewerton but with plenty of nearby services for resupply and repairs, if needed.

Further west on Rt 31 is Palmyra (photo below right), which bills itself as the "birthplace of the Church of Latter Day Saints." It is about nine miles from Newark and little Port Gibson is somewhere between the two. The canal in Palmyra is a couple of blocks north of downtown, but the Muddy Waters Cafe is close to the docks, which are located in a basin rather than along the canal itself, and it looks like a very secure spot to overnight. There are bathrooms and picnic cover, six slips with electric and more room to anchor out. Museums and restaurants are not far away. Nearby, west of the Palmyra Landing is Aqueduct Park and Lock 29, and there are more spots there to anchor out of the canal.

Macedon has a very large Canal Park (photo top left opposite page) but it was a bit harder to find because it is not in the center of town. The park is just upstream from Lock 30 and only three miles from Palmyra. There was plenty of parking, a launch ramp, dockage up and downstream of the lock and more spots to anchor out in the "old canal" above the lock. There are even free camping spots and a covered picnic pavilion. In addition to services and charters, there is a ramp and this is another





mid canal location where you can launch your boat and store the trailer for a cruise.

I did eventually end up in Fairport (photo below), site of the unusual Fairport Lift Bridge, about eight miles west of Macedon. There is dockage on both sides of the canal and nice looking restaurants just a few steps away, with more within a block or two. They charge a fee to dock but apparently there are nice bathrooms and showers, electric, water and holding tank pump out that are included in the docking fee. And there was a pleasant dockmaster nearby to help with docking and to collect the fee (see www.village.fairport.ny.us/uploads/1/7/6/5/17656211/docking_packet_2018.pdf).

Fairport's town dock looks pretty busy (photo top right), even on a weekday before Memorial Day. But there is additional dockage west of the lift bridge that is away from the immediate hustle and bustle of town. About a mile upstream there are places to anchor out of the way, a little further there is a launch ramp with paved parking.

State Street takes you over the canal in Pittsford, about six miles past Fairport. The State Street bridge is in the background in the photo below (looking southeast). The town dock is just east of Main Street. The area is pretty swank and there is dockage on both sides of the canal. Lock 32 is about a mile west of Pittsford and Lock 33 is about a half mile further on, there is no Lock 31, it wasn't needed when they built the new canal. I didn't see a town map at the landing and the town website does not provide much info but Google Earth shows that there are at least half a dozen places to grab a bite to eat near the docks.



Pittsford was the endpoint of my Erie Canal scouting tour, about 100 canal miles west of Brewerton. If I continued west past Rochester I would investigate the following towns and landings; Spencerport, Brockport, Sans Souci Park, Holley Canal Falls Park, Albion, Knowlesville, Medina (looks very nice), Middleport, ramp at Gasport, Gasport Hartland Rd, Lockport, West Canal Marina (North Tonawanda). From Henrietta (Lock 33) to Lockport, is the so called "60 mile level," the water level changes

only 2' and there are no locks. The original Erie Canal ended in Buffalo, today the canal ends in Tonawanda, 338 miles from Lock 2 in Waterford, New York and about 180 miles from Brewerton.

Conclusions

I still have many questions and need to do more research but I learned quite a lot on this scouting trip. I confirmed what I had read about the small, boater friendly towns along the Erie Canal and verified the feasibility of towing a small boat up and finding a spot to launch onto the Canal.

Depending on how much time I have and how far I want to travel, there are a number of choices. The section between Three Rivers (say, from Pirates Cove Marina) and Fairport/Pittsford is very appealing because of the friendly small town landings between them. And if I don't want to deal with locks, or wanted a longer trek, the 60 mile section west of Pittsford from Lock 33 (near Henrietta) to Lockport would be a good choice. There are also small towns along that section of the Canal and the next time I'm in that area I will need to check them out. If I start in Brewerton that would add another rural 40 miles of canal cruising.

For more information on the Erie Canal, here is the link to the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor website, www.eriecanalway.org, which has a huge amount of information and fast links. And I found another good resource, "Discover the Erie Canal" at www.discovertheeriecanal.com/western-erie-canal, that is also useful but is much slower.

Cruising north of Crown Point provides a lot of sailing opportunities without ever being very far away from a shore. Port Henry and Westport have good launch ramps at the south end of the lake. Once north of Essex, Lake Champlain widens and distances get longer. Willsboro and Port Douglas might be good spots to launch from. The interesting islands, which provide lots of shallow draft gunk-holing spots, are up in the north end of Lake Champlain and there is a NY-DEC launch ramp at Great Chazy, south of Rouses Point.

We've all heard about cruising "The Great Loop," up the Atlantic Coast and the Hudson River, across the Erie and Oswego canals (or the Champlain and Chambly canals to the St Lawrence River) to the Great Lakes, down the Mississippi River, across the Gulf of Mexico and around or through Florida back to the starting point, more than 5,000 miles.

Patty White at Pirates Cove Marina suggested a different itinerary, the "Little Loop." I had never heard of this so I had to do some research once I got home. "The Little Loop starts where the Erie Canal joins the Hudson in Waterford, New York, then proceeds west on the Erie and Oswego Canals to Lake Ontario. Crossing the lake to Kingston, Ontario, the Little Loop picks up the Rideau Canal to Ottawa and heads down the Ottawa River to the St Lawrence Seaway. Finally, the loop proceeds northeast to Sorel, Quebec, and follows the Chambly Canal to Lake Champlain and the Champlain Canal back to Waterford, New York." (www.backcoveyachts.com/a-little-loop-adventure/). It sounds tempting. And it's a lot shorter. Maybe scouting the Little Loop will become the subject of my next road trip?



On Lake Champlain, I would probably find a launch ramp on the New York side, and then plan on stopping at towns and state parks on the Vermont side when I need a break from cruising or supplies. New York's Department of Environmental Resources launch ramps don't require a permit and look like they would be good enough for a multi day cruise. And the NY-DEC provides a very helpful list of all the launch ramps all around the state, here's the link, www.dec.ny.gov/docs/fish_marine_pdf/nyboatlaunching.pdf.

Background

This article is the second in a series recounting *Tidings'* 2019 cruise. 2019 was the second summer of my continuing adventure to circumnavigate the "Lower 48" of the United States in a 19' Cornish Shrimper named *Tidings*. The plan is to do the circumnavigation over a period of five to six years, leaving the boat where she ends up when the warm weather stops each year. The trip began at Kent Island, Maryland, in May of 2018 and ended for Season One in August in Rockland, Maine. Season Two began in June of 2019 with a shakedown cruise in Lake Canandaigua in upstate New York and continued with cruises in Lake Champlain, Lake Huron, Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. *Tidings* and I traveled several thousand miles by road and a few hundred by water. I hope you will enjoy the stories.

Leaving New York

Tidings spent the winter of 2018 in Honeyoe Falls, New York. My friend Steve Warfle kept an eye on her, saving me the cost and worry associated with renting a storage spot far from home. She survived the cold and snow looking no worse for the wear. We did a small amount of work to get her ready for launch and enjoyed a shakedown cruise on nearby Lake Canandaigua on June 18. Returning from the lake that evening, we stopped to pick up some Buffalo Wings (this dish originated in Buffalo, New York) because I wanted to get the authentic local experience.

I sat with Steve, his strong wife Suzanne and their above average children, Helen, Andrew and Teddy at the family table sharing food and stories. I drank Genesee Cream Ale, ate more than my fill of wings and savored the warmth of this wonderful family's hospitality. The evening ended with Steve, Helen and me playing music and singing together. Helen is a pianist but that night she played the melodica while we strummed guitars until well past my normal bedtime. I feel lucky to have befriended such good people.

I would have liked to have stayed for another couple of days and gone sailing in Buffalo Harbor but Pete Peters and I had made plans to meet in Burlington, Vermont, on June 19. So I gathered my gear, did a quick check of boat and trailer and headed west early the next morning. The drive to Vermont was uneventful until I got to the city of Burlington where I encountered an impressive number of potholes that punished the truck, boat and trailer. I was surprised at the poor quality of the city streets. But as the summer progressed, I found the same situation in Montreal and Ottawa. I guess if there is heavy snow and heavy traffic, the roads are a mess by early summer.

Lake Champlain

Pete and I met at a launch ramp on Mallets Bay in Colchester, which is just north of Burlington. It was late afternoon and raining when I arrived. We worked in the rain getting *Tidings* rigged and ready to launch. When all was ready to go, we enjoyed an early dinner at a nearby pub and waited for the rain to stop before putting her in the water. I didn't notice it at the time but a small amount of rainwater made its way into the bed of my truck as we were loading up the gear and provisions.

We launched *Tidings* about 30 minutes before sunset and motored out to anchor in a shallow spot near Thayer Beach at the mouth of the bay. The rain had stopped and Pete

Tidings' Great Adventure Season

Part 2 – Lake Champlain

By Douglass Oeller

Reprinted from *The Mainsheet*

Newsletter of the

Delaware River Chapter TSCA

and I enjoyed a very pleasant sunset playing music and sipping favored beverages until the mosquitoes found us and it was time to retreat to the cabin for the night.

The forecast for the next day was for heavy rain. We decided to motor to Burlington Harbor, take a walk around the city and spend that night at the city dock. Pete had done his medical residency in Burlington and had fond memories of the area. He was especially keen to see what had changed in the decades since he left Vermont. We arrived at the town marina around noontime. We called ahead to arrange for a slip but the place seemed to be staffed by teenagers who did not communicate with each other. When we arrived the youngster on duty was not expecting us. I stayed with the boat, rigging a rain fly over the cockpit, while Pete walked up to the office to register us.

He came back chuckling about a "senior experience" that had just occurred in the office. Pete had commented to the young man that the marina seemed mostly empty of boats. The reply he thought he heard was, "We get a lot of comedians later in the season." Pete said, "Well, that must be fun. Do they tell you jokes?" The young man stood, puzzled, for a minute and then replied, "No, I said Canadians." They both had a good laugh. For the rest of the trip when we saw a boat with a maple leaf flag we would wonder aloud if maybe they would tell us a few jokes. It was funny. But maybe you had to be there.

By the time we had *Tidings* secured and the rain fly in place the rain was a steady downpour. We were already wearing rain suits and Keen sandals so decided to walk to the downtown area for lunch and some sightseeing. Pete assured me that it was only a couple of blocks away. It turned out to be more like six blocks, mostly uphill, but the rain wasn't cold and I had recovered from the sciatic pain that limited me so much the previous summer. It was a pleasant walk. We found a local pub that had craft beers and homemade soup. It was an excellent lunch and a good way to spend a rainy afternoon. After the meal we made our way back to the marina. Pete napped while I used the public wifi to catch up on some work for my clients (I am a mostly retired consultant to the veterinary pharmaceutical industry).

The next morning, June 21, the rain stopped and the wind picked up. We had plans to meet Steve Warfle that night near a launch ramp on the east side of South Hero Island. It was about a 30 mile trip and, of course, the wind was blowing from the northwest at 10-15 knots. I worked out the time and distance and decided we could make it on time if we motor sailed. Pete had grave doubts but bowed to my authority as captain. This was a new situation for both of us. We have sailed in company many times, each in our own boat. And I had sailed as crew on Pete's keelboat a few times. But he had never crewed aboard my boat. Both of us made the adjustment without any real tension.



I have learned through experience that *Tidings* goes to windward in these conditions pretty well with no jib, a double reefed main and the D-sail running at moderate rpms. We did a series of long tacks up the lake, anchored for lunch in a cove in the lee of Bluff Point on Valcour Island and reached the gut between North Hero and South Hero in mid afternoon. We had to motor through the gut and wait for the drawbridge to open on schedule.

Once clear of the drawbridge, we were able to shake out the reefs, shut down the D-sail and run downwind toward our anchorage. Remarkably the wind strength diminished as the afternoon progressed. We ended up motoring downwind to reach the anchorage in Paradise Bay before dusk. Steve contacted us by phone and we made a successful rendezvous with him and *Wildcat* shortly after sunset.

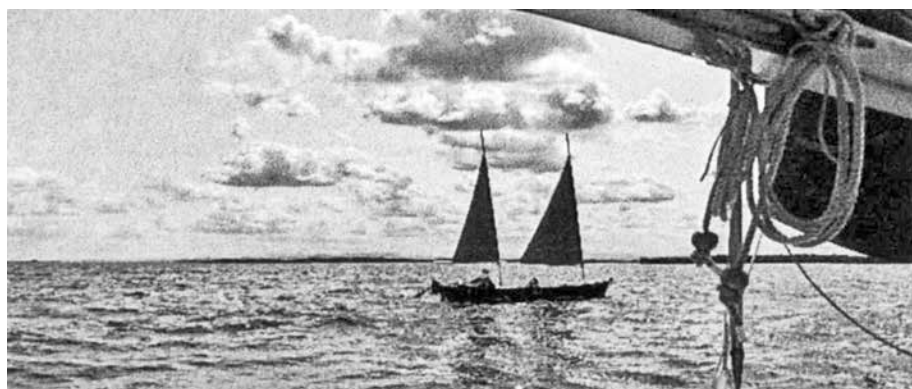
I had noticed a small amount of water on the cabin floor the previous day and by the evening of June 21 the amount seemed to be increasing. I noted in my logbook that we might have a slow leak, perhaps the stuffing box again? I resolved to inspect it the next morning.

When Pete, Steve and I get together there is always animated conversation interspersed with songs and sips of distilled or malted beverages. As the night went on, Pete noticed that I seemed quiet and asked me if everything was OK. Everything was actually very good. There was just no need for me to talk because those two had a lot of catching up to do. When the flow of music, liquor and conversation finally slowed, we turned in for the night with the two boats rafted on *Tidings'* anchor.



The next morning, as I was getting the milk for our coffee out of the cooler, I noticed that water had once again accumulated on the cabin floor. It didn't require much perspicacity. I was wearing wool socks and stepped in the puddle. I had the lid of the cooler open and, standing there with one wet sock, it dawned on me that there was very little melt water inside the cooler and a sizable puddle underfoot. I uttered my standard mantra for such head-slapping moments, "It's a good thing I no longer fly airplanes." Then I screwed the drain plug tight in the Yeti and stopped the mystery leak.

We cooked breakfast and spent a leisurely morning drinking coffee and drying out *Tidings'* cabin. In the early afternoon Pete transferred to *Wildcat* and set off for a day of sailing with Steve. Our plan was to meet up that evening in St Albans. The wind was gusty at 10-15 knots. I decided to tie in a single reef as I would be sailing solo. It was a sunny and pleasant day and we all enjoyed the long beat to windward. As the afternoon progressed, I removed the reef. We chose an anchorage behind Rock Island and settled in for the night.



The next morning, June 23, we made our way back north to the top of South Hero, motored under the drawbridge and through the gut, then sailed south to an anchorage near Phelps Point on the southeast side of Big Hero. Winds were moderate and the sun shone bright. There was very little boat traffic apart from a few powerboats and the occasional ferry. We reached the anchorage in the mid afternoon and met up with two of Steve's friends who arrived in a small powerboat.

The decision was made that the five of us should take the little speedboat across the lake to the Naked Turtle, a waterfront restaurant in Plattsburg, New York. The distance was about 15 nautical miles. There was a 1' chop in the lake and we had to go upwind to reach the restaurant. The trip only took about 25 minutes but was a cold and bone jarring ordeal with the boat crashing through the waves. The experience reinforced my preference for sailboats or slow cruisers.

The meal and company were excellent, the discomfort assuaged with margaritas and the trip back to the anchorage was much more pleasant with a calmer lake and the wind behind us. Our motorboating friends delivered us back to *Tidings*, bade us farewell and roared away into the gathering darkness. We three sat up until late that night sharing stories and talking about how lucky we are to be sailors.

Steve had to head for home on June 24. We had breakfast together and then parted company at 1030 with *Wildcat* headed for a launch ramp near the bridge to South Hero

Island and *Tidings* motoring in very light wind back toward Mallets Bay. The parking for the ramp at Mallets Bay is free and there is no restriction posted about the number of days you can stay. But it is an isolated and unlit gravel lot hidden by trees. We were pleased, when we reached the ramp that afternoon, to discover that our vehicles were still there and unmolested. Having confirmed that all was well, we sailed back out to spend another night (Pete's last aboard) at anchor.

The morning of June 25 dawned with light rain, moderate wind and heavy rain forecast for the afternoon and night. We decided to sail *Tidings* back to the marina adjacent to the launch ramp. It was pleasant going when at 0900 my phone rang and I suddenly remembered that I had a teleconference scheduled with a client in England. I turned the boat over to Pete, ducked into the cabin and answered the phone.

The client, a Scotswoman who did a lot of sailing in her youth, heard the background noise and knew instantly that I was sailing. When I assured her that I had a competent crewman in charge of the boat, we settled into a productive call. At one point she inter-

rupted me to say, "Oh, I can hear that you're tacking the boat!" I think she wished our places were reversed and I was the one sitting in a London office.

The call ended and I returned to the cockpit but asked Pete keep the helm because it was his last day aboard. I would be sailing for the rest of the summer. We reached the marina around 1130 in heavy rain. We stopped at the fuel dock to register for a slip and fill the Diesel tank, then got *Tidings* secure in a slip with the rain fly up over her cockpit. Pete took his leave, sloshing off through the rain to retrieve his car and head for home. It suddenly seemed quiet and lonely in the little boat, so I went ashore, indulged in a luxuriously long and hot shower and spent the afternoon doing laundry and reading email. That evening I turned in early to the sound of rain drumming on the cabin roof.

The skies were clear the next morning but the humidity hovered in the 90% area and the air temperature quickly rose to the 80s. I was surprised to encounter these conditions because my expectation was for cool temperatures. Being freshly bathed with clean laundry and a full Diesel tank, there was nothing for it but to go sailing.

I decided to explore the parts of Mallets Bay that we had bypassed earlier in the week. The bay is roughly circular in shape with a diameter of about two miles. The entrance to the lake is about a half mile wide and there are hills that provide shelter from the wind. For a powerboater this is a good thing but it creates some challenges for a small sailboat

with ever changing wind speed and direction. I had no specific destination for the night so just enjoyed messing about and going where the wind favored. It was very relaxing to have no schedule or destination.

Late that afternoon the skies darkened and my VHF radio broadcast an alert for strong thunderstorms with dangerous winds approaching from the east. I decided the prudent move would be to head for the eastern part of the bay and seek protection in the lee of the trees that line the shore. I dropped sail, fired up the D-sail and slowly putted in that direction. When I got there I discovered that most of the protected areas were filled with private mooring buoys and there was no open space to anchor. I had to go further north along the shore where there was already a group of large cruising sailboats at anchor. The boats were anchored very close together and, to my eye, had very little scope on the anchor lines. All of them were flying the flag of Quebec. Aha! A bunch of comedians!

I picked a spot distant from the crowd, dropped anchor, set it with a lot of scope and settled down to enjoy the oncoming storm. It was glorious. There was wind, rain and lightning. I figured that the larger boats with tall masts would attract the lightning, so just sat in the cockpit letting the cool rain wash away the sweat of the day. The storm blew through in about an hour. I dried off, put on fresh clothes, fixed dinner and went to bed early.

The next morning (June 28) was completely calm. I pulled anchor and motored back to the Colchester launch ramp to pull *Tidings* and do some work that is easier done ashore. As I motored past the Quebecois cruising boats, I noticed that every one of them was using all chain anchor rode. That explained their comfort with close proximity and little scope. I did not notice anyone laughing or telling jokes. All of the boats listed Montreal as their home port.

I arrived at the ramp mid morning, put *Tidings* back on her trailer and spent the rest of the day working the rigging, trimming, sanding and varnishing the frames for my new bug screen cabin washboards and installing supports to hold my new chart/cocktail table in place over the motor box. It was miserable hot work without a trace of a breeze. I took frequent breaks to sit in the shade.

My original plan was to sleep aboard *Tidings* on the trailer, but it was too hot there in the sheltered parking lot. I launched her, parked my truck and motored toward the northwest part of the bay hoping to find a secluded anchorage. I discovered that the shoreline there drops off very sharply to more than 50'. In order to anchor in 10' of water, I had to be closer to shore than I felt comfortable with. But, with night falling, I had little choice. I anchored in the lee of a tall hill near a private dock where there seemed to be no one at home. My plan was to tie up to the dock if the wind picked up and we started to drag anchor. I fixed a simple dinner of rice and precooked chicken and then decided to try out my new Helio shower device.

The device is a plastic bag with attached air pump and shower hose. You fill the bag with water, pressurize the water using a foot pedal pump and shower using a hose much like the one on a kitchen faucet. The hose is long enough to allow the bag to remain on the cockpit floor while bathing. The technical aspects of the Helio worked fine. But I had forgotten to use the Helio (sun) part, which is to fill the black bag early in the day and

let the sun warm the water. Instead, I filled it with cold lake water for this experiment. I learned that using cold water is a good way to conserve water. It was so cold that I could only tolerate short bursts. So I focused on the sweatiest body parts, yelled out a time or two when the water struck particularly sensitive areas and towed off quickly.

I fell asleep shortly after sunset. The wind and the motion of the boat woke me at 0130 as another thunderstorm blew through. *Tidings* was straining at her anchor, the wind was blowing parallel to the shore and now I had no protection. I put on my rain gear and moved to the cockpit to be ready to start the engine if we began to drag. The problem was that it is very difficult to judge distance in the dark at 0130 with the wind howling and adrenaline pumping through my body. I shone a strong flashlight toward the nearby dock and watched to see if we were moving relative to that fixed point. It seemed we were not, so I turned out the light, stayed in the cockpit and checked repeatedly for the next hour as the wind howled. I was not enjoying this.

Finally the storm passed, the wind eased and I could shed the rain gear and crawl back into my bunk. Snuggling under the heavy wool blanket was pure luxury. I have read many stories of adventure at sea with boats riding through big storms that last for days. Experiencing a very small adventure within easy swimming distance from land is enough of a challenge for me.

The morning of June 28 came clear and sunny with light wind. Most of the humidity was now gone and I left the anchorage ready to enjoy a pleasant day of sailing. Since my arrival, *Tidings* had not ventured south of Burlington so I decided to go and see Port Douglass, New York, which has a public launch ramp. Douglass is my mother's family name and I was naturally curious to see the town. The wind remained light but it was a pleasant trip.

When I arrived there at 1630, I took a short walk around and was disappointed that there seemed to be little of interest within easy walking distance. After a short stroll, I climbed back aboard and set a course back across the lake toward Shelburne Bay, Vermont. The wind died completely so I dropped sail and motored for several hours and reached the anchorage late in the afternoon.

There were a few other boats in the anchorage and I noticed that some people were swimming. This struck me as odd given the frigid water temperature I had experienced the previous evening in Mallets Bay. Then I realized that we were now in a large shallow area. What a difference! I lowered the boarding ladder, eased gratefully into the pleasantly cool water and enjoyed a water level view of *Tidings* and her dinghy (*P.S.*) as I swam circles around the two boats.

After the swim came dinner and a show. The show was a formal dinner party taking place about 50 yards away at a lakeside mansion. The guests were in fine attire. Music was playing. Portable tables set with linen and silver graced the grassy back yard. Uniformed waiters carried silver trays of drinks and canapes. It wasn't exactly Great Gatsby, but it was at least Pretty Good Gatsby. I couldn't live like that.

When I awoke on June 29, there was still no wind so I decided to tackle the job of rewiring my anchor light and trouble shooting my depth finder. The anchor light was simple. The wire runs out the side of the

base of the wooden mast. There is a connector plug on the deck to attach this wire to the boat's electrical system. I had forgotten to unplug this connection when lowering the mast and the cable pulled free from the connector. I had the proper tools and a new connector aboard. Fixing this was a pleasant job that took about an hour.

Trying to get the depth finder to work was not so easy. The unit was working intermittently. I deduced that there must be a short somewhere in the wiring and the easiest way to fix that would be to run a new wire. Easier said than done. I will spare you the details but point out that the work involved sitting in the cabin, tracing wires, removing, revising and replacing the circuit breaker panel and dealing with battery connections in the bilge. Not pleasant, not fun. By afternoon I had the unit rewired and working again, intermittently. This was an obvious disappointment that just seems to be the nature of the product. In very deep or very cloudy water conditions the sensor cannot get a good signal from the transducer. I wish that I had done more research before buying this device.



In the early afternoon I took another refreshing swim, fired up the D-sail and motored out into the windless lake toward the Community Boathouse Marina in Burlington. I arrived hot and tired in the early evening, found my reserved slip in the now crowded marina and again deployed the rain fly over the cockpit. This time it was for privacy from the crowds. For the last hour of the trip I had entertained myself dreaming about women and glasses of beer.

My wife Meg was to arrive at the Burlington Airport the following morning. I figured that the beer would be ready and waiting at the marina restaurant. The dock area of the restaurant was so crowded on this Saturday night that I could not even get a seat at the bar. So I walked up the hill to the Burlington Bay Market & Café. This place is a treasure! It has cooked to order food, a selection of local beers and an ice cream counter. What more does a boater need? How about a deck overlooking the lake where you can enjoy your meal while watching the sunset in nonpretentious atmosphere? Got that, too!

The crowds thinned after sunset when I returned to the marina. I spent the evening relaxing in the cockpit and chatting with a few curious passersby. *Tidings* always attracts attention because of her small size and wooden spars. I enjoy meeting strangers and hearing their stories. Some had boats of their own. Others were just curious. When the visitors finally left for the night, I was ready to climb into my bunk and enjoy a night without anchor watch.

The morning of June 30 I rose early, enjoyed the hot shower at the marina, had a wonderful breakfast at the Market & Café and then hailed a Lyft driver for a ride to Colchester to get my truck. I needed to meet Meg at the airport in the early afternoon. I had booked a hotel room for Meg's first night in town so I brought my overnight bag with me.

When I got to the truck and opened the cargo area, I immediately knew there was a problem. The inside of the camper shell was steamy with a faint odor of mildew. I had parked the truck facing slightly downhill. The water that leaked in while we were rigging *Tidings* the first day had pooled at the front of the truck bed, right where I had stowed Meg's suitcase with all her vacation clothing. The suitcase was soaking wet with visible mold growing on the maroon colored fabric. When I removed the contents I discovered that the dye from the suitcase fabric had leached into Meg's clothing leaving a mildewed, tie dyed mess. This was not optimal. I left the suitcase unzipped and open, cleaned and aired out the bed of the truck, then drove to airport to meet my luggage free spouse.

Meg was disappointed about her clothing but took the loss philosophically. At least we were in a place that offered plenty of shopping choices where she could replace the essentials. We spent the next two days being tourists in Burlington and environs. The food was good. The scenery was wonderful. And it was pleasant to relax without a schedule.

Meg is a federal government executive. Most of her days are over scheduled from morning until night so she needs a day or two to decompress at the start of any vacation. One of the highlights of the sightseeing was our visit to the Shelburne Museum, where we toured the steamboat *Ticonderoga* and learned how she was moved inland over an ice road on a sledge towed by a pickup truck to her current location.

By July 2, we'd seen the major tourist sights, done some necessary shopping and Meg was ready to go sailing. She had a two week vacation and we planned to spend most of it sailing in the North Channel of Lake Huron. But before that I wanted her to have at least one overnight cruise in Lake Champlain. We chose Bluff Point, near Valcour Island, as our destination. Pete and I had stopped there early in the trip. I like the anchorage and its proximity to Mallets Bay.

Pete explained to me the historical significance of the place. During the American Revolution, Benedict Arnold anchored his fleet there to wait, in hiding, for the arrival of a large British force coming down from Canada. The Battle of Valcour ensued.

The only fly in the ointment was, the flies. They were numerous and pestilent. I assume that they came from the nearby woods. We deployed a mosquito net that covers the entire cockpit. This gave us a bit of sun protection and refuge from the flies. Safe and secure we enjoyed an afternoon of leisure napping, snacking and birdwatching. The following morning we sailed back to the launch ramp at Mallets Bay, got *Tidings* secured on her trailer and started the drive to Canada.

To be continued.



This 18th century engraving shows the British defeating the American Navy on Lake Champlain during the Battle of Valcour Island.



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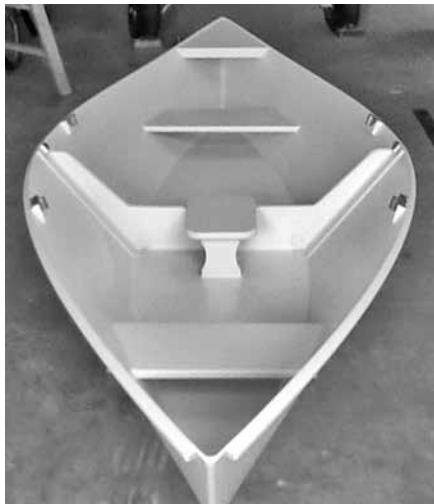
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Chloe and Fiona

Way back in the 1990s I acquired the very first (ever in the world) large fiberglass sailboat hull. I rebuilt her and was thrilled with her sailing abilities. She was designed by Sidney Herreshoff who was in the same family as the more famous Nathaniel and L. Francis. She was very fast (13+ knots) and it was obvious that towing a dinghy was a problem at those speeds. She is double ended and needed a special dinghy that would fit on deck aft of the aft cabin. Another problem was there was only 7' of space, too short for a normal dingy.

I designed the Chloe/Fiona at 13' and cut her into two pieces that would nest together. She is held together with two $\frac{3}{8}$ " bolts with wing nuts at the lower main frames. The rail is held with two spring loaded latches. I added a small deck to the stern of the aft section so that she could be launched after assembly without taking on any water. Total weight 65lbs. She is a bit tippy as all dories are, but really very nice.



Rowing Boats For Sale



Adirondack Guideboat
Peterborough version about 90 years old and rebuilt with sliding seat with 2 sets of outriggers for 10' or 8' oars



Columbia Dinghy
11'6" with or without spritsail sailing rig



Columbia Tender Dinghy
11'6" with spritsail rig



CLC Lighthouse Tender Peapod
13'6" Just finished, complete with sailing rig



Doug Hylan 13' Peapod



12' Flat Bottomed Skiff
Plywood version of Cape Cod Shipbuilding also available in 14'



Bolger Gloucester Gull Dory
stitch and glue, 75 lbs

Big boat sharpie canal boat *Flossie*, not for rowing Gloucester Gull dory. *Chloe & Fiona*, 13' designed to nest in two parts to fit on the stern or bow of 42' Ketch, 65lbs





Meandering the Texas Coast

By Michael Beebe

Copono Bay

Copono Bay in *Red Top*, a highly modified Lehman 12'. Winds southeast to 15. It's shallow in there, partway in I saw an opening back into the bay and took a chance. Lots of fish being spooked as I slide by. Maybe 12" to soft mud. Twice I had to get out to get over a shoal spot. It was here I found it to be mud to the knees, what a mess. The first spot, with the sail raised, I just let the boat pull us across.

The second spot leading back out into the bay, more mud, then solid sand with shell and a few oysters. The previous trick didn't work. Four inches of water covered the narrow sand bar, maybe 20'. *Red Top* draws 6" empty so with the bowline around my waist and back and forth, wiggling like, I got across. Maybe 20 minutes.

The sail back to the ramp took another 30 minutes or so uphill. The water had a greenish tint to it, it's warming up some but not time for swimming. At the dock, before heading out, a power boater struck up a conversation. Told me his father, in days past, used to sail a Snipe. Said he won the nationals in 1948, yeah, a few days ago, 72 years worth.

I asked if he sailed. "No," he said, "I used to years ago, but now I just fish." Interesting fellow, we talked a bit about *Red Top*, he could tell I built it.

It was a nice afternoon.

On the Edge

Red Top again, 15 SE, 23 gusts. On the edge of needing to reef, I decided against it. Was planning on a down bay romp, into the wind and through a cut to Mud Island. Got bored and thought I'd enjoy sailing out into Aransas Bay. Turning around, 30 minutes or so found me doing such.

Overpowered now with the free wind off the long fetch of the bay, I needed that reef in. And what was normally an easy thing to do, the sea room I had given myself was rapidly disappearing.

So, set the hook and straightened the mess out. A few minutes later I was once again heading out onto the bay with the first reef in. The Lehman 12 is designed as a cat with 80sf of sail. I changed things around a little, it was also a daggerboard. Now with P&S leeboards and sporting a lugsail, flying only 60sf, she already sails with about a 17% reef, so my first reef is quite deep, it has another as well with an eye even added up high for downwind. Out on the bay things settled down on *Red Top*. Not overpowered, more control, no napping though.

Back at the docks I met a fellow going out in his beat up Carolina Skiff, maybe 16'. We talked some, exchanged names, him in his boat, me in mine, he raises an elbow and gives a bump.

Aw! The days we live in.

Somethin Has Got to Go

Red Top stayed on his trailer today, the only wetness came from the early morning dew. I'd thought about going, had planned on going, even told a fellow I was going. But I didn't. No, I didn't. This morning about 4:45am, sitting on the couch, thinking about coffee with the boys, the inside is closed and the guys bring lawn chairs and sit around outside with their joes solving the world's problems. Seems as if we got a slew to fix in this day and age.

Well, they didn't get my two cents this morning, no sir. Sitting, like I said, early on fixing to go, I shook my levis out and that simple action took my back with it at the same time. There'd be no coffee with the boys and no sailing *Red Top* either.

A couple of years ago or thereabouts my mother-in-law came to South Texas to die. Well, the climate here is so good she improved and is still hanging around. She was here in the house with us until she got her own place next door. While here I put in a handicap grab bar in the bathroom.

That bar came in handy today. I didn't think I'd see the day arrive so soon. The back has been bothering me lately, lately being the last year or so. I easily keep track of it with the boats I'm working on as well as this fixer upper of a house we find ourselves in, came by way of Hurricane Harvey.

So! Something has got to go, I'd just as soon keep sailing so the fixing up of old sailboats are the ones which will be going. I told my wife earlier this morning and she just rolled her eyes, then explained she was holding back an "I told you so!" She's been after me for years just to go sailing. I'd best heed her advice.

A friend I just got off the phone with was another to bring it to my attention, the back thing. The conversation switched to sailing small boats here on the Texas Coast, he did a lot of sailing in an old Potter 30 or 40 years ago. Maybe the old Potter wasn't so old back then after all. He was telling me of a fellow he'd met who owned a house along the ICW, way south of Corpus Christie, one which you had to boat in to. Nice dockage offered, solar shower, shampoo even, anytime, the owner said. My buddy said people treated him like a pet, wanted to scratch behind his ears, take him home and feed him. I know the feeling. It's the boats.

So I'll be taking a few days off. About the time my Linda is ready to throw me out of the house the back will be fine and it'll be time once again to get out on the water.

They'll be a few small sailboats up for sale shortly, fixers. But don't get your hopes up; these are fixers, fixers with lots of potential.

I Haven't Given Up on *NED*

I haven't given up on *NED*, the little guy holds a lot of potential. Holds already a ship full of dreams. My buddy Walt came by one day and we proceeded to fill the little guy up with adventures and dreams that well could take a lifetime and then some to see fulfilled. That's the way it is with grown boys.

Boys of yesteryear still reaching for the past of youth. I'm one of 'em. Walt's another. Some of you reading this can relate as well. We, our small town of Rockport, was shut down last night. At the stroke of 12 it happened. Changed, not quite in the twinkling of an eye, but changed nonetheless.

Yesterday I stopped by the police department and asked if I, as in single, "Can I take my small boat out and go fishing, alone?" The short three letter answer, "Yes." Well, things are looking up already on this first morning of change.

NED is on a trailer now, the weeds have been cut but it still sits over at the shop. My boat of choice for this partial shutdown is *Red Top*, a "highly modified" Lehman 12 as my daughter says. I brought him home yesterday, him and his trailer are sitting in the sideyard next to the mother-in-law's quarters. I'm glad he's there. This morning I'm already adding some improvements and it's still dark outside and my buddy Walter is fast asleep. Mr Mitty might be surprised with these new ideas, surprised maybe, but daunted? Never.

This new idea I'm pinching from Scamp. More flotation down low and a dedicated bilge to facilitate the use of a bilge pump, two actually, a manual and electric, the "Sponge Bob" thing has got to go. I'm even going to come out of this with a small footwell. Should be nice. There'll be pictures but by the time the work is done and the posting made, it'll all be long forgotten. Things move fast on the net and if one takes a bit too long it'll all be lost in a sea of past memories. Fine by me and just as well, there's an awful lot to wade through.

I'm pretty sure between the shed being roofed, chicken coop being built and the improvements upon *Red Top* and grabbing a few sailing days in between, this lightweight martial law thing will soon pass. That's my hope anyway, yours as well, I'd imagine. Let's hope it doesn't morph into something else.

I Almost Went Sailing

I almost went sailing this afternoon. We went into the "stay at home" order last Saturday night. At the stroke of midnight, like Cinderella, everything changed. Life as we knew it, ceased, it won't return. I was told of this lifestyle change Friday evening of last. This being Tuesday, the noose tightened to include the waters as well. Was I ever delusional to think my little world would move along unchanged.

Saturday I went by the police department to see if the stay at home order included solo boating. I was told it did not. Sunday at the market I asked a policeman to get a second green light of confirmation. He said, "Have fun." A text from a friend late Sunday, who knows the county judge, told me the boat ramps were being closed. I thought he was pulling my leg, I hoped so anyway.

Finishing work around the house today after lunch I decided to go for a sail. It's but two miles to the ramp. Just last night it was still open. Not anymore. Barricades and yellow caution tape strung all over like toilet paper left no doubt as to the meaning. Another friend had just called and said the ramps near his house, 15 miles south, were being closed as well.

A few years back at a French business meeting a government official asked the group of businessmen what he could do to help. A voice resonated from across the room, which all could hear, "Nothing, don't do anything, please don't do anything. Just leave us alone." Here it's only just beginning. All aboard!

Port Bay

I launched *Red Top* at the ramp on Hwy 188. It's a private ramp, cost \$5. There's only one other ramp open that I know of, there are other ramps I'm sure, just not aware of. The wind was north, 17mph, gusts to 21 NOAA said. It may have been a bit more. I left the dock with the first reef in and it seemed easier leaving on a port tack with the wind coming over the port side of the boat.

Being my first time here, it was fitting I had a chance to potentially get in trouble right out of the gate. My thought was with the wind, as it was I'd sail to the other side of the channel and get a better shot of leaving the channel and entering Port Bay. The water thinned right away, downwind now were piles of an old dock, not good. Not really enough speed to sail through the eye and better position myself, the leeboard and now rudder were dragging in the mud, slowing me down and adding to the problem of coming about. Grabbing the paddle, pulling up the leeboard, leaving the rudder down to act like a pivot, I now began to motorsail, paddling on the starboard and bringing the bow around, I was on my way.

Out on the bay I'd gain a lot on the port tack and lose most of it when coming about on the starboard tack. After a bit it seemed the wind was letting up. Dropping the sail I shook the reef out and after putting it back up, *Red Top* kicked up his heels some and we were then gaining much more on both tacks.

Out where Port Bay meets Copano Bay, the wind decides to come back up to speed. I wasn't sure if the bigger water of Copano helped with the wind speed increase as it funneled into the narrow area of Port Bay. As it was, I decided to go back in anyway and didn't want to spend the time to put the reef back in. I figured if I could keep the boom out over the starboard side on the way back in, everything would be fine, and it was.

Another thing I've noticed lately about my self made sails out of a commercial grade poly, more sunlight is coming through the sail. One area about 3' across, above the second reef is showing a lot of daylight. Not a good thing. Another thing I noticed, my hand sewing and using webbing at the corners and no grommets along the head, laced through

the sail at reinforced points along the head every foot or so, have held up fine, that and the light line sewn into the sail's edge.

The sail fabric itself is falling apart. It sheds now like it has dandruff which, to my surprise, is telling me my lousy sewing job is outlasting the sail. That surprises me to no end.

Sailing back in and to the dock was no problem. Dropped the sail a good few yards from the dock, the wind pushing just enough, the downhill leeboard I thought to ready for the fender I use it for. A quick thought to myself, "I wonder if raising this will cause a problem," it did and I immediately lowered it. I would have missed the approach. All in all it was a nice afternoon's sail. Supper waiting hot when I got home.

Out of Bayside Ramp

April 26, 2020: *Red Top* out of Bayside ramp on Copano Bay, 86° temp, wind east @15 NOAA said. Lot of wind chop, had to beat out of the small harbour. Leaving the dock, directly downwind and ahead was a piling, then some sea grass, open but shallow water towards the small breakwater, "Not for the faint of heart I thought." Checking everything twice then again, did not want any mishaps.

Got out into the bay, beating, more short chop made slow going. Sailed south after sailing north for a bit in front of the small community, then back to the opposite shore on the other side of the highway bridge. Going back in I was hoping to get away without an incident, it wasn't to be. The sail still having too much wind in it didn't fill forward and release like I had planned. The second part of the plan worked, looping the bowline around the short dock pile, hit the dock with a crunch, tearing a zipper in the starboard bow about 6" long and then rope burned my right hand's fingers. The part that worked was looping the short pile.

A fellow crabbing at the end of the dock gave a compliment, said I sailed, "Old School."



Got Canoe Glassed

Got the outside glassed yesterday, got the plans one year four months ago. I shelved the build for a while, now it's a rush to get it going. Most all the kayak/canoe launch sites are open, this is a Selway-Fisher design, a Waterman 12' sailing canoe. Sleep aboard as well.



Interesting

The boat ramps have opened up, just like the navigation district said earlier in the week. One would think I'd be down there bright and early to launch *Red Top*, my 12' Lehman sailing dinghy. I'd been working on it this past month, bummed that the ramps are closed, go figure.

South Cove Harbour is my favorite place to launch, I've grown to enjoy doing a loop around the islands just outside the harbour mouth or out into Aransas Bay itself. Sometimes, when the wind is touching 25mph or a bit more, I look forward to the sail. Other times, when the wind is the same and it isn't in me to go, I tell others the reason being I don't want to get beat up. Maybe I'm tired.

Getting old and soft. Doctor said I needed to get some exercise, maybe I should take her with me when it's touching 30, put her on the foredeck or have her make a fresh pot of coffee under sail. She might say I'm doing fine in that department. Said as well I gotta cut out sugar. I've known that for years. Actually I did quit ice cream, no really, a few weeks before I went to the doctor's, so I figure I'm ahead of the game.

I scrubbed down the inside of *Red Top*, took everything off the boat, scrubbed the overhead, cabin sides and inside of the hull topsides. Taking off all winter stuff, taking off stuff I never use also. Earlier when I loaded back up, I've room to spare.

What I keep aboard are two anchors and rode, about four days of food, fuel, my small stove, repair kit, lines of all sizes, bivisack and summer bag, cockpit tent, change of clothes, hats, mosquito repellent, sunblock (derm doctor would smile, then frown when I forget to put it on), four gallons of water.

In practice I could stay out for an easy overnight or two if I had an unplanned adventure, those are never planned anyway. But here I sit, typing this missive. I did drive by the ramp earlier, did I mention that? Parking lot was full just like a holiday. One would think we were school kids let out on summer vacation. Problem being, the vacations are getting shorter and costing way too much. Recess is over children, back to your seats.

I don't see much on the net about the gathering storm clouds. Are they being ignored purposely? Are we expecting the calvary, not knowing their horses died in the desert and they ain't coming? Ignoring the warning signs all around us. 2+2 is still 4, book cooking may bring down the heart attack deaths, book cooking will give false hope to be sure.

Enough of this, the ramps are open and I'm going sailing before they close again.

McKinleyville, California

A McKinleyville Coast Guard unit highlighted their first all female helicopter crew in celebration of Women's History Month. According to Women in Aviation International, "while the number of women in the US Aviation Field is still small with women only representing about 7% of the total pilot population, the number of women involved is steadily increasing and women are represented in nearly every aviation occupation today." Coast Guard Sector Humboldt Bay was able to achieve an aircrew consisting solely of women due to an increase of female Coast Guardsmen at the unit.

"The Coast Guard is striving to increase the number of women in the organization overall, not only in aviation," said Lt Audra Forteza, a Sector Humboldt Bay aircraft commander. "It's wonderful that our small unit has enough females that we can show young women in the community that they do have these kind of opportunities and hopefully we can inspire them to pursue their career dreams and grow up to be whatever they want to be."

Sector Humboldt Bay's area of responsibility consists of 250 miles of rugged coastline from the Mendocino-Sonoma County line north to the California-Oregon border.



Boston, Massachusetts

Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod will celebrate its 50th anniversary at Joint Base Cape Cod and more than 100 years of Coast Guard aviation in Massachusetts on September 19, 2020. Air Station Cape Cod is scheduled to hold a free public open house with tours of the unit, food, entertainment and static displays of historic and current aircraft. As the oldest continuously operating air station, the roots of Air Station Cape Cod can be traced back to 1925 when the first formal unit was established on Ten Pound Island in Gloucester.



Our Coast Guard in Action

The Air Station supports every Coast Guard mission in the Northeast but its primary missions are search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime pollution response. The men and women of Air Station Cape Cod are responsible for all Coast Guard aviation operations from the Canadian border to New York. The Air Station is home to two aircraft, the HC-144 Ocean Sentry airplane and the MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and has a crew complement of 180 personnel.



Houston, Texas

The Coast Guard rescued five boaters after their disabled vessel began taking on water near Freeport, Texas. Coast Guard Sector Houston-Galveston watchstanders were notified of a disabled 18' vessel taking on water with five boaters aboard at the mouth of the Brazos River and drifting offshore. Watchstanders issued an urgent marine information broadcast. A Coast Guard Air Station Houston MH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew and a Station Freeport Response Boat-Medium boat crew were launched.

Once on scene the Freeport boat crew located the disabled vessel, transferred the five boaters onto the response boat and transported them to Bridge Bait Marina in Freeport. All five boaters were not wearing lifejackets when the response boat crew arrived.

"This rescue is a good reminder that all persons aboard a vessel need to have a fully serviceable, easily assessable lifejacket," said Lt jg Terrell Sisk, Sector Houston-Galveston command duty officer. "These boaters were fortunate that our crews were able to reach them before they entered the water."

Key West, Florida

The Coast Guard and a commercial salvage towing company rescued three people whose 30' pleasure craft was taking on water approximately six miles south of Key Largo.

Coast Guard Station Islamorada personnel received the initial notification via a phone call from the crew of the pleasure craft stating there were three people aboard and their vessel was taking on water. Sector Key West watchstanders were able to coordinate the commercial salvage towing company and assist with communications.

A Coast Guard Station Islamorada 45' Response Boat Medium crew arrived on scene and began assisting the three people aboard in keeping the boat dewatered until a commercial salvage towing company arrived. They were not able to determine the source of flooding. The commercial salvage towing company crew arrived, embarked the three people and towed the boat to Port Largo.

"Upon discovery by the vessel's crew, they immediately did the right thing and called for help," said Chief Warrant Officer Scott Goss, commanding officer of Station Islamorada. "By not delaying to make that call, and with our crew able to respond so quickly, they were able to dewater the vessel before stability was compromised and ultimately saved it."



Portsmouth, Virginia

Coast Guard crews searched for survivors after a Cessna airplane crashed southeast of Bogue Inlet near Emerald Isle, North Carolina. Watchstanders at the Coast Guard Sector North Carolina command center received a call from Air Traffic Control Cherry Point at approximately 11pm that an aircraft had dropped from their radar 12 miles southeast of Bogue Inlet. The aircraft reportedly had two persons aboard. The Coast Guard launched crews aboard the following assets to search, an MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Air Station Elizabeth City, a C-130 Hercules aircraft from Air Station Elizabeth City, a 45' Response Boat Medium from Station Emerald Isle and Coast Guard Fast Response Cutter *Nathan Bruckenthal*.

The Coast Guard later suspended its search of a combined total of 676.3 square miles over air, sea and land pending the development of new information.



Juneau, Alaska

The Coast Guard rescued two kayakers in Ketchikan after one of their kayaks sustained damage and took on water. The crew of Coast Guard Cutter *Bailey Barco* arrived on scene and recovered both kayakers along with their kayaks and brought them to where they launched at Mountain Point in Ketchikan. No injuries or medical concerns were reported.

Watchstanders in the Coast Guard Sector Juneau command center in Juneau received initial notification from a Metlakatla fish and wildlife officer reporting the two female kayakers stranded on Race Point in Nichols Passage. The Coast Guard issued an urgent marine information broadcast to alert mariners in the area and launched a 45' Response Boat-Medium crew with a skiff from Station Ketchikan. The crew of *Bailey Barco* was in the vicinity of the kayakers, arrived on scene first and rendered assistance.

Boston, Massachusetts

Coast Guard Station Burlington's crew members rescued a 65-year-old man who fell through the ice of Lake Champlain, Thursday, near Mills Point, Vermont. The crew worked with the Colchester fire and police departments to pull the man from the ice 30 yards from shore. The man was found standing on top of his all terrain vehicle, which was submerged in the water. He was transported to local EMS and treated for symptoms of hypothermia then transferred to the University of Vermont Medical center. The ATV, sitting in 4' of water with approximately 2.5 gallons of gasoline, was not recovered and Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation was contacted to respond for cleanup.

Portsmouth, Virginia

Members of the Coast Guard, Virginia Marine Resource Commission, Virginia Department of Game Inland Fisheries, Accomack County and Riverside Hospital met the survivors rescued in a joint rescue operation in January at an event in Cape Charles, Virginia. The survivors and members from the responding agencies provided statements about their efforts and the conditions that allowed them to be successfully located.

On January 19, 2020, three men were rescued after their boat capsized in Nandua Creek, Virginia, as a result of the joint operation between the participating agencies. It took rescue crews an hour to locate and retrieve the sportsmen. The water temperature that day was 46° and the air temperature was 38°. All three men were treated for hypothermia at the Riverside Hospital.

"One of the most important lessons learned from this, and many other successful rescues, is to always file a float plan with a family member so that someone knows when to expect you," said Cmdr. Danielle Shupe, Rescue Mission Coordinator for Coast Guard Sector Virginia.

Key West, Florida

The Coast Guard medevaced a 70-year-old man from his 42' motor vessel, *Indigo Falcon*, near Dry Tortugas National Park. Coast Guard Sector Key West watchstanders received a medevac request from the man claiming he'd been experiencing chest pains for the past two days. Watchstanders diverted the Coast Guard Cutter *Charles David Jr.* crew who embarked the patient and transferred him to awaiting emergency medical services at Coast Guard Station Key West.

EMS reportedly transferred the patient to Lower Keys Medical Center.

Charleston, South Carolina

The Coast Guard, along with partner agencies, rescued five people after the vessel they were on allided with the southern Charleston jetty. The North Charleston Fire Department arrived on scene and safely removed all five people from the vessel and transferred them to a Coast Guard Station Charleston 45' Response Boat Medium which transported them to Ripley Light Marina.

Coast Guard Sector Charleston received a report from Sea Tow that the *Strike Finder*, a 52' sport fisher, had allided with the southern Charleston jetty with five people aboard. A Station Charleston RB-M boat crew, an Air Facility Charleston MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew and various partner agency assets launched to assist.

Sector Charleston watchstanders contacted the M/V *MSC Antonia*, which was making its inbound transit, and the pilot aboard reported he could see a sport fisher on the southern jetty. Watchstanders were able to get in touch with one of the persons aboard the sport fisher via cell phone who reported they were stuck on the southern jetty, taking on water and wearing life jackets. There were no reported injuries and the vessel owner will arrange salvage.

"The immediate and swift response of our Coast Guard boat and helicopter crews along with our Charleston area maritime partners was vital in safely rescuing all five people from the vessel," said Petty Officer 3rd Class Reilly Taggart, Sector Charleston Command Center Watchstander. "This case is a good example of how we regularly work together with many different agencies to respond to those in need."

Involved in the rescue were Coast Guard Station Charleston, Coast Guard Air Facility Charleston, South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, North Charleston Fire Department, Sullivan's Island Fire Department, Mount Pleasant Fire Department, Charleston Fire Department, Charleston Pilots, TowBoat US and Sea Tow.



Jacksonville, Florida

The Coast Guard rescued two people from the water near Disappearing Island in New Smyrna. A Coast Guard Station Ponce De Leon Inlet 24' Special Purpose Craft Shallow Water (SPC-SW) boat crew recovered both people from the water and safely transferred them to awaiting EMS at Station Ponce where they were transported to Halifax Health Medical Center for further medical assistance.

Coast Guard Sector Jacksonville command center watchstanders received a report from Volusia County dispatch of two peo-

ple in the water. At the same time, a Station Ponce De Leon Inlet watchstander received a call for two people in the water and a SPC-SW boat crew launched to assist.

St Petersburg, Florida

The Coast Guard rescued two boaters from an overturned 24' vessel 14 miles off Clearwater. A Coast Guard Station Sand Key 45' Response Boat-Medium boat crew recovered a man and woman from the sinking vessel and took them to Clearwater City Marina without any medical injuries or concerns.

Coast Guard Sector St Petersburg watchstanders were notified by a personal location beacon that had been activated by one of the boaters. They were located by a Coast Guard Air Station Clearwater HC-130 Hercules aircrew. An MH-60 Jayhawk aircrew was also on scene.

"Having a personal location beacon made a big difference in this case," said Senior Chief Petty Officer Angel Ramos, the command duty officer at Sector St Petersburg. "Cell phones don't always work offshore and these devices allow us to begin a search from a last known position."



New Orleans, Louisiana

The Coast Guard searched for a person in the water in Saint Andrews Bay near Panama City, Florida. Coast Guard Sector Mobile received a report of a black male wearing black swim trunks going overboard from a pontoon boat in the vicinity of Saint Andrews Bay.

Involved in the search were Coast Guard Station Panama City 29' Special Purpose Craft boat crew, Coast Guard Air Station New Orleans HH-65 Dolphin helicopter aircrew and the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The Coast Guard stopped searching after the person was found deceased. Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission recovered a body matching the description of the missing person near his last known location. His identity was later confirmed.

Inland Waterways

ASRTO towing vessel, *Cooperative Spirit*, and Elite Towing's mv *R.C. Creppel* collided near the Hale Boggs Bridge in Louisiana. The former was headed upriver with a tow of barges while the latter was moving downstream with two barges loaded with sulfuric acid. The fender bender released acid fumes while the *R.C. Creppel* itself was sunk. A good Samaritan vessel pulled one crewman to safety but three others were missing. The river chaplain from Seaman's Church Institute, Tom Rhodes, was among the several who spoke at memorial services.

Bad legislation makes lawyers wealthy. Under the Obama administration, EPA pushed for broader powers over waters of the United States (WOTUS) that was well intended but incredibly ill defined. The 1972 Nixon administration's Clean Water Act was remarkably ambiguous. The Supreme Court added to the confusion in *Solid Waste of Cook County vs US Army Corps of Engineers* (2001) and *Rapanos vs the US* (2006) decided that the Clean Water Act had limits to the authority under the act, but then the members could not agree what those limits were! Justice Scalia wrote a narrow definition while his colleague, Justice Kennedy, wrote a much broader one. Thirty-two states immediately sued.

On January 23, EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler and Assistant Secretary of the Army Corps of Engineers, R.D. James, signed the Navigable Waters Protection Rule. Quite expectedly, the Greens and Democrats screamed bloody murder, calling this a major rollback of environmental security. Farmers, ranchers and those doing business on the rivers hailed this as a sensible clarification of a murky law. Immediately press coverage became more biased and less accurate. In the final analysis the current regulations do indeed simplify and explain the rules, whether one agrees or not on the law itself.

Fifteen barges of coal northbound under tow by the *Washington* hit an Ohio River bridge in Kentucky near Cincinnati. According to the Coast Guard, neither the tow nor the bridge was damaged, however, the barges broke free and had to be wrangled by other boats. Several were still rafted together. Nothing was spilled. I guess I WILL get that lump of coal for Christmas after all.

Miss Odessa, pushing six hopper barges of rock, ran aground in the Gulf Intercoastal Waterway near Mile 99 while it was attempting to leave the Atchafalaya River and enter the Gulf. When the tow tried to work itself free, one of the barges split in half and sank, closing the area to traffic. Three days later 12 southbound tows, 28 eastbound tows and four upstream tows were awaiting removal of the mess.

The Good Old Government announced a \$225 million discretionary grant for Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP), however, they are not going to be using any of this money for inland ports. This is not surprising since the Maritime Administration was given over \$1 billion for port development but only \$7 million will be used on Marine Highway Program (rivers). Admiral Mark Buzby, Maritime Administrator, was quoted in *Waterways Journal* as complaining about the lack of concern for the 12,000 miles of inland waterways.

The Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers shut down traffic for several miles on the Cumberland River because a tornado



Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.
(Doc) Regan

ripped out a high voltage tower and splashed it nicely into the river. The beastly lies in about 30' of water but it took an inordinate amount of time finding it. High winds and strong current made recovery a whole lot of fun.

Twenty-nine (not 30 as previously reported in the news) barges broke free in the same storm. They were mostly loaded with gasoline and diesel fuel but nobody was hurt and no spillage occurred. The free ranging raft did manage to mangle several private recreational docks downstream.

Jim Beam and water, please. Whoops, Jim Beam and Glen's Creek and the Kentucky River do not mix well. In fact, 40,000 barrels of the good stuff caught on fire compliments of a lightning strike and emptied into the waterways killing fish for 62 miles. The company had to pay \$120,000 to replace the fish and \$600,000 in fines. This (a) explains the rise in liquor costs, (b) explains why so many fish died with happy faces and (c) why we drink Jim Beam on the rocks.

History

Among the photos of the Keith Norrington collection is one showing the steamers *Spread Eagle* and *Dubuque* at the St Louis landing. The *Spread Eagle*, formerly named *City of New Albany*, was built in Jeffersonville, Indiana, in 1892. It was 225' in length with a 35' beam while her three boilers pushed 20" cylinders in a 7' stroke. This ship sank in 1916 but all crew and passengers survived. *Dubuque* was a bit older by 13 years, a bit longer at 250', a bit wider at 39.5' and a bit stronger with four boilers heaving a 21" cylinder on a 7' stroke. After working for several companies, the boat was purchased by Diamond Jo until she was semi destroyed in the infamous cyclone of 1896. She was then hauled to her namesake for rebuilding. She ended up a bit longer, a bit wider and a bit stronger. Captain William Burke manned the bridge for 27 years.

In 1901 *Dubuque* sank after ripping a 142' hole in her hull but she was quickly raised, repaired and put back to work. She continued to work from 1920 until 1941 when the grand old lady was dismantled and later scrapped in 1945. Sixty-two years of service on the Inland Waterways is remarkable for an old sternwheeler.

The old Liberty Ship *John W. Brown* was evicted from her former pier in Baltimore, however, she has found a new home not far away at the Newgate Avenue pier, also in Baltimore.

The entire story of the Liberty Ships is fascinating insofar as the British ships of the era were pretty much the blueprint for a quick and dirty replication away from the Nazi bombs. Henry J. Kaiser pushed his way through the front door and proposed building these ships at his shipyard and at additional shipyards that the British would fund and give to him after the war. The rest is history.

Arabia, a lovely steamboat, shoved off from Kansas with 200 tons of supplies for 16 small river towns along the Missouri River. Unfortunately, a walnut tree fell into the river to a depth at which no one could see it and the *Arabia* tore out her bottom on the hardwood. She sank quickly but no one was hurt. Over 132 years the river migrated about half a mile and the area over the steamship became a cornfield in which someone messed around with a metal detector and the buzzer went nuts. Digging deeply into the field (messing up acres of potential cropland that could easily produce a couple of hundred bushels of corn).

Where were their priorities? The scavengers found the old lady. Because she was so deeply in the ground, oxygen was unavailable, thus, most of the supplies were pristine. French perfume, pearl buttons, casks of whiskey and 4,000 pairs of shoes were found. The area is now a museum showing off the artifacts (Iowa Corn Growers Association has filed a lawsuit demanding the area be placed back in cropland. OK, I lied about that).

Gray Fleet

An old bromide about politicians is "Don't listen to what they say, watch what they do." The new budget forwarded by the White House requested \$19 billion for new ship construction that is about 17% short, according to Rep Joe Courtney (D-CT) who chairs the House Armed Services Committee. The request is for fewer ships than the US has now, in spite of Presidential proclamations desiring more ships.

The budget "shaves \$1.4 billion from the Marine Corps request and cuts the active duty force by 2,100." Remember all the crap everyone gave Hilary about Benghazi and the lack of security? One aspect of the Congressional opposition to the Defense budget is the total bipartisanship. Rob Wittman, top Republican on the House Sea Power subcommittee, warned that China is projecting a 420 ship navy while we struggle to create a 355 ship navy. And all of this is prior to the flooding problems and coronavirus economic impact on our economy. Priorities are going to get rearranged quickly, violently and significantly.

The coronavirus has wreaked havoc with the Navy as SecNav ordered a stop on travel for crews. This means that crew changes cannot come to pass for the time being. Most ships have Blue/Gold crews where one crew is aboard while the other is ashore. They simply trade positions and keep the ship on mission.

The *USS Vermont* was supposed to be commissioned and that has been postponed. *USS Iowa* (SSN-797) crew and Captain were supposed to be in Des Moines asking the legislature for about \$100,000 for the Commissioning Committee (of which I am the Treasurer). The Iowa Legislature went home for the duration and the *Iowa* crew are not allowed to travel.

Two sailors, one at sea and one at San Diego, have tested positive for the virus. Evidently they will be sent home for personal isolation. This is a difficult situation for everyone. When I was in the Navy I was diagnosed with double pneumonia while on leave. The doctor, initially thinking it was spinal meningitis, placed me in quarantine. I was hospitalized for 26 days. When I was late reporting to my next duty station, my pay records got lost and I was out of the loop so my orders were always fouled up right up to the day I was discharged.

Out of sequence, I ended up mess cooking for 30 days, was on work detail for four months and finally "a place" was found for me (excess billet) at my duty station. I did burn bag duty for several weeks. Finally, the Navy gave up and made me a Drug Counselor for two years. Meanwhile my "A School" classmates went to Morocco or back to the Defense Language Institute for a second language. I drank coffee and tried to stay out of everyone's way. I never did have a "real" assignment in four years.

Three sailors on board the aircraft carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt* were diagnosed with coronavirus and were airlifted to an American medical facility that was first identified as Guam but later information stated it was not Guam. The issue is that over 5,000 sailors are aboard the *TR* and many, if not most, have been in contact with carriers of the virus (no pun intended). Since the ship was on duty station, this has made some interesting operational decisions about where to go, what to do and where not to go. Of course, no matter what orders are given, someone will be upset about them. After this was written an additional 20 sailors became infected with coronavirus.

White Fleet

As this is being written, the US is in the middle of the coronavirus isolation and panic. Exactly how the financial crisis will be handled will be clearer when you read this. However, internecine war has broken out between those who want to help the locals and those who believe in the Trickle Down Theory that the money should go to large corporations in order to stabilize fiscal concerns quickly.

This battle is especially seen with the White Fleet. The White House wants to help the cruise line industry as quickly as possible since it is a mainstay of the economy of coastal regions. Cruise Lines International Association have cancelled all cruises leaving the US for at least 30 days as per the request from President Trump. The toll on the industry's economy is incalculable as it hits crew, motels and hotels at ports of origin, dockworkers, etc. The first quarter earnings are already a disaster and the second quarter will be worse. This writer, among others, have decided to stay at home.

The opposition note that the cruise lines are virtually foreign owned, they do not pay taxes to the US, they are horrendous polluters and they tend to be among the worst industries vis-a-vis health and sanitation. Of course, they ignore the stevedores, the dock workers, the travel agents, etc, etc, etc. You know, the Americans who pay taxes, do not make tons of money and are currently unemployed.

Fincantieri, the world's largest cruise ship builder, sent all its workers home as the virus hammered Italy. Speaking for the company, a spokesman stated that it was imperative to protect its workers and the country. They maintain that the closure will have little if any impact on deadlines for new ships.

Aftereffects from World War II are making the news, especially in the Nordic regions of Europe. After WWII, Russia acquired significant land from Finland including Petsamo, that nation's only ice free port of significance above the Arctic Circle. Murmansk, Russia's ice free port, and the Linnahamari area (once part of Finland) are the sites of new port developments for international and domestic cargo. This Northern Sea Route (NSR) will see about 3 to 4 million tons of freight annually and will allow ships to sail from the Pacific or Atlantic through the Arctic Ocean to a very large port facility.

Merchant Fleet

RADM Mark Buzby, the US Maritime Administrator, recently complained yet again about the problems with a lack of American flagged ships and enough officers to crew them. He said that the nation needs an additional 45 American ships to maintain defense needs and the issue behind the shortage is the Jones Act that requires American made, American crewed and American flagged ships be used for intra coastal trade. He stated that we are about 1,800 officers short.

Buzby also decried that 46 Maritime Ready Reserve Fleet ships are, on the average, 44 years old and parts are no longer available for them. The average age of the crews is 47 years and retirement isn't far away. He noted that his responsibility is to have all needed Defense Department equipment ready for sail within five days. Clearly that is an impossibility.

We must remember that during Desert Storm and subsequent "wars" we had to waive this law and use foreign ships and planes to handle cargo. DoD also had to hire large numbers of cargo planes to provide transport.

Environmental News

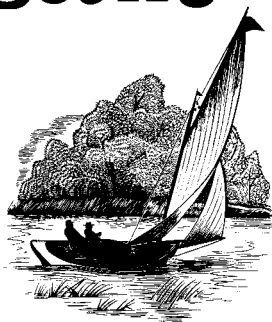
Fish farms have experienced significant problems raising salmon. Two hundred thousand fish live in each cage, however, holes in the nets allow thousands to escape that cost the farmers significant income. Worse, these tame fish breed with wild species that tend to be weaker than normal, an impact deeply concerning to environmentalists. In the past divers have been employed to examine and repair the nets. This human intervention causes great stress on the salmon and many fish die.

Modern technology has found an interesting solution. Turtle shaped robots roam around the pen 24/7 looking for breaches. They seem like any other turtle and their presence does not bother the fish. The robots can spot problems that can be fixed before they become bigger issues and the salmon are a happy school. I want a robotic turtle for my birthday.

Lock and Dam #10 at Guttenburg, Iowa, monitors the Mississippi water flow at that point. In the Great Flood of 1965 (I almost missed the Peter, Paul and Mary concert because of it) 46 million acre feet per year was recorded. The Big Flood of 1993 (that inundated the City of Volga and changed the course of the Volga river to its original channel under the elementary school) saw a record 58 million acre feet, a record that stood until 2019 when a whopping 78 million acre feet ran past the dam.

I once sandbagged against the Turkey River so much that my back was killing me, I lost my watch and damn near lost my wedding ring and Upper Iowa University ring. The following morning the flood was about 15' over the top of the sandbags. About one-third of the town was underwater. The river ran up to the entrance stairs of St Joseph's Church where we could literally pick up fish stranded on the sidewalk. Let's see, wasn't there a story about bread and fish, Assistant Secretary of the Army Corps of Engineers?

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This is the story of my ill fated second boat. The tale of my first boat, the somewhat crude but serviceable and well traveled *La Madalena*, was recounted in the March issue. Shortly after the completion of that skiff my wife and I took it on a three day island hopping cruise upon beautiful Priest Lake in the Idaho panhandle. Our load on that trip was about 380 pounds what with boating and camping gear, food, water and crew, which is pretty close to the maximum capacity of the little skiff. Fellow boaters we met along the way said they couldn't believe the two of us could fit into such a small boat and where were we hiding our camping gear? Thankfully we're used to traveling light.

The little skiff outdid itself but we ran into wind and chop that made me wish we were in something bigger. Also, I daydreamed of taking my wife on a long journey down the Columbia from the Canadian border to Grand Coulee Dam, a distance of some 150 miles. The body of water backed up by that dam is called Lake Roosevelt. Hundreds of miles of empty, sandy beaches to explore. One shore is mostly empty federal land and the other side mostly empty tribal land. There is a scattering of excellent campgrounds, some accessible only by boat, and one can also camp almost anywhere at whim along the shore. It seems a small boat paradise yet is almost deserted. Don't believe me? Just ask Dan of Almost-Canada. *La Madalena* could take one person on such a voyage, but not two. And so began the quest for a bigger boat.

Our home is an off grid mountain homestead we've built ourselves, accessible by car for about seven months and on snow shoes the rest of the year. I am a transplanted Yankee, a Libertarian and something of a contrarian. Most folk have a career which seems to occupy the vast bulk of their adult lives, buy expensive toys they don't have time to use and spend decades paying everything off. I've never bothered to work more than I needed to, never got into debt and would rather make something than buy it. Like other woodland creatures with no visible means of support our income is low by some standards, dipping below 12K some years.



One boat, some assembly required.

I suppose it is only natural that I am drawn to the books of Philip C. Bolger and Harold "Dynamite" Payson. Mr Bolger was not only a very talented and prodigious designer of boats of all kinds, he was also a fellow Libertarian, something of a contrarian and understood amateur boat builders. In the foreword to Payson's book, *Instant Boats*, he wrote, "People who build boats because they like carpentry build better boats and have less grief than those who build because they want a boat they can't afford. The former are admirable and valuable, but I have more empathy with the later."

A Farewell to My Fantastic Featherwind

By Bob Van Putten



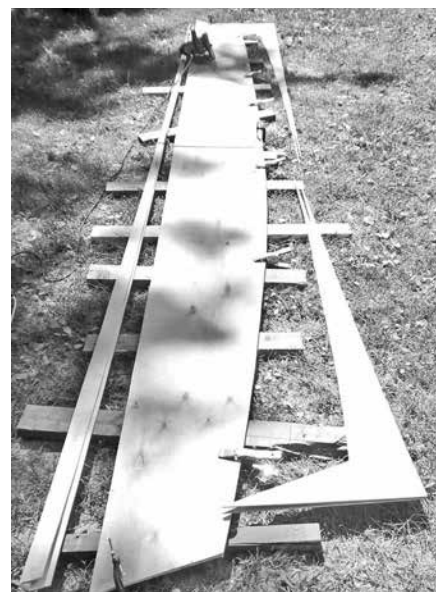
Mr Payson was the guy responsible for the "instant boat" concept in the first place. In the same book he wrote, "The instant boat idea wasn't a speculative concept dreamed up out of a blue sky. I had been selling boat plans for years, and I had been getting too many letters from customers saying they couldn't build a boat from them. When I'd ask, "Did you loft it full size first?" the reply I got would be, "What's lofting?"

I like instant boats. It isn't that I don't appreciate traditional wooden boats, I just can't afford them, don't know how to build them and they usually don't make good trailer sailers anyway. It is true that I don't care for modern fiberglass craft, probably because that's what most folk have.

I wanted more capacity than *La Madalena* provided but the new boat still needed to be transported on top of my jalopy. This rig has over 300,000 miles on it and the bumpers are held on with wire. Not worth the effort and expense of putting a hitch on it, even if I could afford a trailer. An outboard motor was also out of the question so the boat must row well enough when the wind quit.

I thumbed through the books and studied many boats. I've always liked the Surf but it's on the heavy side for getting up on top of the car by myself. June Bug is light but the removable mast step would be a hassle to stow whenever I needed to row. Windsprint seemed just the ticket, a big double ender with a large uncluttered cockpit, a huge 113sf sail and weighing only about 100 pounds. It is very easy to build, all straight cuts and no transom with pesky bevels to worry about. But double enders are hard to cartop unless light enough to hoist up on my shoulders canoe portage style, or if I have two strong men to throw it up there.

If a boat has a transom I can attach a dolly to it, flip it over and roll it about like a wheelbarrow. Throw the bow up on top of the car, push the boat on up till it balances, then lift the stern up. I never have to lift more than half the weight of the boat. Surf, June Bug, Zephyr, Windsprint, Pirate Racer, each of these economical boats take just four sheets of plywood to build! There are more but they start to get heavier. Nothing seemed quite right. Finally I stumbled across a reference to something called "The \$200 Sailboat."



One side cut out.

The design is in Bolger's book *Small Boats*. Bolger described it thus, "I drew the best flat bottomed, straight sided boat I could, to sail... I don't see how a real sailboat with as good a performance and as few vices as most could be put together, one off, much quicker than this one, or out of cheaper materials." Well, a clever Yankee named David Carnell took the design and simplified it. Bolger had drawn a sloop rig with a stayed mast and a few other elaborations. David's version uses the lateen sail from a Sunfish, or the polytarp equivalent, and is stripped of every last bit it doesn't need to hold together and float. At about 100lbs it is readily cartoppable yet it carries four adults with ease and there are enthusiastic reports of the boat's performance. David Carnell is no longer with us but the plans are still available from Thomas Vetromile of Sagle, Idaho. This boat seemed just right!

Not only did I get plans, I got full size frame layouts (which I found more confusing than simple, well drawn plans) along with instructions and photos for a ripping guide for my circular saw, oars, cleats, thole pins, splicing rope, a polytarp Sunfish lanteen sail clone, detailed cartopping directions, advice on epoxy, flotation and construction alternatives, copies of glowing emails from previous customers, a list of recommended reading, Chapter 15 from Bolger's book *Small Boats* and finally a glossary of boating terms! Not bad for \$30. Clearly this was intended to be the only resource needed to build a boat for the first time.

Plans in hand, off I went to Home Depot for the materials. I got a sheet of 2" Styrofoam for flotation, a few good 16'2"x4's, two tubes of polyurethane glue to stick the bottom on with, a pint of Titebond II for the frames, two pounds of galvanized roofing nails, a gallon of Bondo polyester resin and four sheets of plywood. And that's where I made my fatal error. Instead of the recommended ACX exterior grade 1/4" plywood at \$30 a sheet, I was seduced by the beauty and low cost of underlayment plywood. It was only \$12 a sheet. It said it was waterproof. The exterior was flawless. I remember standing by the plywood racks in the store making the decision. I justified it by thinking that this really thin plywood would make a really light

boat. All I can say is that sometimes I can be too cheap for my own good. From Amazon I ordered fiberglass cloth and tape. I misjudged the amount of cloth and got enough to do three boats. Total cost, only \$211!



The transom with its pesky bevels, the hardest part to make.

It was high summer so I built the boat outside. I'd just made a plywood bed platform for a little log cabin I'd recently completed and this got drafted into service as a temporary outdoor workbench. The work went fast but I managed to cut a bevel the wrong way on the transom. I discovered that it is quite impossible to set roofing nails below the surface of plywood and rejoiced when I realized that meant never having to putty nail holes! When I was done with everything else I simply put a strip of fiberglass tape set in polyester resin over each neat row of nail heads on the outside of the boat, which worked great.



Ready to assemble.

Like all flat iron skiffs the boat is made by cutting the sides to shape and bending them around some frames. Add the transom, the stem and the chine logs. Nail the bottom on, flip it over and add the gunwales, mast partner and step. All that's left is the sailing bits, rudder, leeboard, mast and sail. No lofting, no splining, no strongback, no jigs and very little waste! I realize that there are those who sneer at instant boats. That's silly and just plain boat snobbery.

The truth is, this type of construction is an ingenious American invention dating back to the early 19th century. Just as soon as sawmills started producing inexpensive wide planks, some clever Yankee figured out how to make small boats by bending preshaped side planks around frames to produce skiffs with a tiny fraction of the labor needed to make any other boat. They were called "flat iron skiffs" because of their resemblance to irons people used to flatten the wrinkles out of clothes with.

In *The Sharpie Book*, Reuel B. Parker writes, "The New Haven flatiron skiffs were from 15' to 18' long and had a beam of approximately one-third the length. Due to the flaring topsides, beam on the bottom was about one-fourth the length. The skiffs had broad, square sterns and this is what made them hard to row." The original flat irons were not well shaped because they had just been invented and were being built off the cuff by trial and error. In time they evolved into the sharpie. The Featherwind is a highly refined flat iron designed by Philip Bolger, the master of the type. I'm proud to build and sail such a highly refined traditional American craft, boat snobs be damned.



Looking like a boat!

One thing I learned making my first boat was that I never had enough clamps. This longer boat needed even more. I told my wife to keep an eye out at yard sales and I scoured pawn shops. I even bought a couple of new ones. My big splurge was a \$30 Chicago Electric belt sander. The dust collector on this thing never worked but can it remove wood! It isn't a sander so much as an electric wood chewer. It reduces the time it takes to trim the bottom and such like.

It was about this time I noticed some of my plywood scraps laying on the ground about the boat had absorbed water from the earth and dew and were starting to peel. Yikes! I took some scraps and tossed them into a bucket of water. I left them in the bucket for weeks and they were fine. Huh. I didn't know what to make of it but figured there was nothing to do but finish the boat. Besides, I was going to fiberglass it. Then I deviated yet again from the plans.



Fitting the bottom butt strap.

That's something amateur boat builders should be careful about, there are real reasons the experts design 'em as they do. In my defense, it wasn't my fault. I was reading *Boats to Go* by Thomas Firth Jones at the time. "Except at very low speeds," wrote Tom, "the effect of having no hull to end stop the foil shape is catastrophic." He was talking about leeboards and gives the example of a boat he'd built with a leeboard but converted to a daggerboard some time later. "The

improvement was unbelievable. She steered much easier and made less leeway. I'm certain that no one who has ever tried a good sailboat, first with a leeboard and then with a daggerboard, would ever go back to a leeboard. There simply is no comparison."

He argues this point so well in his book that he convinced me not to put a catastrophic leeboard in the Featherwind. I was almost done with the boat and had to cut the center frame to build a daggerboard well, fitting it in as best I could. The daggerboard well leaked and often jammed, probably because I was always smacking rocks with the board while sailing full tilt. It took up plenty of space in the cockpit and more than once I'd pulled the board up most of the way out of its well when running downwind, only to jibe accidentally, have the boom smack into the raised board and nearly capsize the boat.



The lackluster lateen.

The rudder setup was inspired by Jim Michalak's book *Boat Building for Beginners and Beyond*. The book describes a kind of tapered track and slide system to attach rudders, the so called "Cary Hinge," named after the inventor. I liked the idea of an easily made wooden track instead of pintles but made it straight without any taper. The track pieces were screwed, glued and fiberglassed to the boat. I screwed some old T hinges I had laying around to the wooden slide and they carried the rudder. This system worked excellently. *La Madalena* uses a long rudder pin instead. Once I dropped the pin overboard in deep water when hanging the rudder, and once I'd simply forgot to take it with me when I went sailing. This wooden track and slide system is foolproof, nothing to drop overboard or leave behind.



A Michalak inspired rudder setup.

Next I fiberglassed the bottom. This was the first time I'd glassed anything and I just couldn't get the cloth smooth. No matter, who cares what the bottom looks like, right? I was impatient to get the boat into the water and slapped on paint over the fresh fiberglass. Finally I cut some saplings for mast and spars and taped together a lateen sail out of an old tarp.

Off to the local lake I went for the maiden voyage. The boat didn't sail very well but it always takes time to get used to a new boat, right? When I landed and flipped the boat over to load it up I was shocked to see much of the paint had come off the bottom! This is how I learned about the wax put in polyester finishing resin. This wax must be completely sanded off before painting because nothing will stick to it. What a pain! So I sanded all the paint off and then had to add another coat of resin because I was down to the cloth, sand again and finally repaint the bottom. Sheesh! I guess I got a smooth bottom after all.



Non stick paint.

I took the boat to the local lake a few more times and kidded myself that it worked fine. Next I planned a picnic on the Roosevelt with my wife. She packed a lunch and off we went, eager to start exploring hundreds of miles of empty, sandy beaches. We spent two hours tacking up the lake into the wind. At the end of that time the ramp we'd launched from was still clearly visible, about 200 yards downwind. My wife was not impressed. I gave up and we sailed the trusty *La Madalena* the rest of the season.



The big skiff has plenty of room.

The big boat was banished to the hayloft. I'd visit sometimes and daydream of long voyages. I thought about her a lot during the long snowy winter and figured the trouble with the boat had to be the sail. The 81sf lateen I'd made for the Featherwind worked so poorly that I had a growing feeling I'd really lucked out with the standing lugsail I'd made for the *La Madalena*. I searched high and low for a better sail pattern and didn't find much. There is the pattern for a 75sf lugsail in Jim Michalak's book but I didn't think it was big enough. I was much impressed with the huge 113sf sail the Windsprint design carried which, after all, is a boat of about this size and weight, and decided I wanted a sail like that one. A big sail would mean less rowing in light winds, right?



Neglected boat.

One day while digging around the internet at a local library I finally found what I was looking for, thanks to the Toledo Community Boathouse. They have great instructions for making a 100sf balanced lugsail on their website. The next summer I bought a brand new tarp, set up my wife's sewing machine out in the yard, turned on my power inverter while the sun was shining on our solar panels and set to work making the best sail I could.



Sailmaking 101.

I believe this sail was designed by John Welsford for his Scamp sailboat. It uses curved edges to give the sail its shape, not darts or pleats. It's still a big job of sewing with a great many patches, reinforcements and three lines of reef points. It didn't occur to me to check the center of effort of the new sail, I just cut a sapling for a taller mast and off I went.

The new sail worked great and my fantastic Featherwind finally started showing me what she could do. She would drift along with just the slightest suggestion of a breeze and was close winded. The big lugsail did take some getting used to and could be quite a handful on the 110lb Featherwind. Once, while rigging it at a dock, a minor gust blew the boat right over. The sail was raised but the sheet not yet connected to the boom. Before the sail could swing around over she went and proved quite difficult to right again.

That summer and the next I sailed her plenty on the Roosevelt. She taught me many things, that no matter how much fun I'm having it really is a good idea to reef a big sail on a light skiff early, that in high winds I not only had to lower the sail but also the mast to be able to row her and that a big, fast skiff could be a heck of a lot of fun! I experimented with sheet to tiller self steering, with lazy jacks and jiffy reefing lines, none of which really worked out very well. All things considered, I think I prefer a standing lug with a sprit boom to the balanced lug sail.

Sadly, she never fulfilled the dream of a long cruise. Every time I took her out she seemed to be leaking a little more. The bottom inside the boat was starting to delaminate. I'd be pounding along in the chop on a big lake, looking down at that thin sheet of slowly disintegrating underlayment plywood I was sitting on and wonder how long it would hold. I considered a layer of fiberglass over the floor, or adding another layer of plywood, but eventually came to the conclusion that I'd really goofed with that \$12 plywood and that no matter how I repaired her I wouldn't trust her bottom to stay between me and the deep blue sea. Sooner or later I'd stomp a foot right through or have the bottom fail in rough going. Besides I figured her sides would start peeling eventually, too, and all the extra weight of repairs would make her hard to cartop.



The big lug sail was ideal with a heavy crew to help hold her up.

I've never had to "retire" a boat before. It's a little emotional. All the effort that went into building, all those trips blasting down the lake in her, the dreams of future voyages, the places she could take us. But a boat that will not stick together isn't worth much and I don't fancy boat planters in the yard. Besides, I knew she wouldn't be the last boat I'd ever build. At the end of the sailing season I stripped what little fittings she had, fired up my chainsaw to cut her up and burned the remains. She made quite a fire. I watched the blaze and reflected that she had been plenty of fun while she lasted, had cost only a little coin and I did learn a lot. I just wish I hadn't been quite so cheap when buying materials. As Philip Bolger once wrote, "Would-be amateur boat builders are, as a class, not the most sensible crew alive."

An honorable end for a wooden boat.



A Different Perspective

You know how some of us sorta keep stuff for later. I've been pressing ahead with a project that is just about the most non essential of all.

I've been forging ahead with the overhaul of an otherwise perfectly functional sailboat. *Lady Bug* has withstood a dozen winters left outside in the snow and the cold. She's suffered some untended leaks and the results of standing water in her bilges. Her sails got mildooowey and her anchor warps sat in an ice bath for who knows how long. Otherwise she could just about jump into the water on a moment's notice. But I started pulling everything apart and changing everything around.

I've been practicing trying to do a job with what is at hand in coffee cans and boxes and plastic totes. Treasures from other times and other projects. I've not gone to the hardware store or the lumber yard. I've been making do.



I've gotta admit I've not got a clue where an assemblage like this came from or "what was eye thinkin'?" at the time. But when I get to figgeritowt how to make the newfangled rudder kick up and, waaaaay harder, stay down this aggregation of Harken meets Ace Hardware will sure come in valuable. I just don't know how that may come to pass yet.

Not smoothed up or torqued down but, hey, not so bad for leftover flooring chunks, MDO scraps, a cupplehunks of thin wall anodized aluminum channel and a passle of almost the right length quarter 20s.



We just need to look at things from a different perspective, eh?

The View from Almost Canada by Dan Rogers



Non Essential Business

Our Gov decided that Frankenwerke is a non essential business and to send everybody home, but since "everybody" was just me I hadda get going on "progress." I climbed to the top of an 8' ladder, stepping over the lifelines and all that clutter, under a 9' ceiling with gooey 'pox and cloth in both hands, stepping over the lifelines and all that clutter and then wriggling under that cockpit sole to glomp up the holes, laying on one shoulder!



Work Like a Champ

What with our emphasis on social distancing, I figured I might as well be out in the shop. First off, I could see that *Lady Bug*'s decade old jackleg mast carrier was empty, the one that I made at the school shop back in San Dog, and then added to "temporarily." Then I remembered that I'd been working out what I might do about all that after the stern carrier broke off.



I stepped back a bit to see things better. The mast was just sitting on the stern pulpit. And up on the bow pulpit, too. Saaaay, not bad. I had made a carrier thingie that had an adjustment for tilt and swivel and an itty bitty little track to set the sailtrack groove on.





The one up forward was a bit different, but then I could see that the slopes and angles of dangles were different too. But howmy-gonna make it stay in place... hmnnnn? "Just like before, with the forestay tensioner... oughta work like a champ..."



Into the Catacombs Below

Years ago I was building a utility trailer. I was gonna paint it red. I went to visit my buddy Dan. He was the Head Mixologist at the Ace Hardware paint department. I said, "Dan, can you make up a prime coat for red?" Well, what I got wasn't exactly RED and when I got the primer on that trailer, I hadda do a dump run. Funny thing, when I backed in nobody seemed to want to take the spot next to me.



I've been having flashbacks to high school. I used to read some. Remember what The Authorities did with the old people during times of crisis and scarcity? Well, poor ol' *Miss Kathleen* has been parked out under a bunch of trees for two whole years now. There were a couple of inevitable deck leaks. Her bilge sump has had about a foot of ice in it until daytime temps rocketed above our normal overnights of 20° erso. As things returned to liquid state it got musty in there



I got to thinking that I should take advantage of the current circumstances and get things cleaned up a bit. That primer is one of those "mold killing" elixirs. There are some catacombs on *MK* that have never really been looked into for, like SIXTY YEARS, under the original plywood floor and under things I built on top of that like the forward berth. For two seasons of cruising and anchoring alluh-time, the anchor rode slid down a hawspipe and dumped into one of those voids under the otherwise almost inaccessible first level, mud, zooplankton, shell fragments, rotted plywood shards, paint chips and sea grass from all over the place. All glopped into the lower reaches where nobody could reach.



I got out the trusty saber saw. Way too restricted for The Man from Milwaukee to maneuver down in there. These are actually spots that I can either look into OR reach into, not both at the same time. Something to consider when slashing at 500 reciprocations per minute with a sharp saw blade right next to a fiberglass boat hull.



Not everywhere was as dry and compliant as other parts of that catacomb. I found Dan's leftover primer on the back row of the bottom shelf of the paint locker and just slathered it everywhere I could reach. Some places responded to the treatment better than other places. Kate tells me that I got good coverage on my nose and forehead.



A Tale Of Two Tachs

For three years, thousands of miles and two different boats, *Miss Suzi* has kept a number of secrets. What started this was how *MS* has always had a penchant for cavitating/ventilating her prop at the most unexpected moments. There were harmonics and intermittent vibrations and generally unaccounted wave propagation connundra that just didn't seem to go away. We went through a series of propellers in just about every config available for that particular 8-splined shaft. And for the longest time all I had for that "control group" thing was my own lousy hearing to detect changes in all above.

So I ordered a fancy dancy "Suzuki" tachometer from an offshore powerboat store in Miami. When I couldn't get decent readings I called The Guy. About all he said was "...you're using that puny assed little motor to push a boat? How big!?" The biggest variable seemed to be that my high dollar tach was only nameplate engineered and the "instructions" were written by a non primary English -speaker, and even those were for several model years prior to the one on *MS's* birth certificate.

After making several demeaning phone calls and trying EVERY setting available, I settled in to just use that machine to show "difference limen" info. *MS* is supposed to top out at near 6k rpm. I could NEVER get more than half of that, no matter what prop, trim angle or special juju I could whomp up. It always seemed like the top half of the "sound curve," only added about 1-300 rummmm rummmmmzzzz. Then Big John told me about Tiny Tach.

I called those guys, too. I have to know how many sparks per revolution I'm dealing with. When I asked about that little divot in the hypotenuse, well, The Guy just said I'd have to "experiment." The expected rev-dwell for this motor is supposedly "around seven hunnert."



So I rigged up the bucket. Even with all the fancy dancy flushing and aux cooling paraphernalia that comes with a *Miss Suzi*, you **MUST** put her in a bucket to get adequate water flow. There's a vacuum break that defeats the other ways to run things on the hard. Yeah. I learned that the hard way, too.

And another thing, I think it's that electronic fuel injection cloak and dagger going on under the hood. I can only rev her up in neutral to just under 2k. After that she starts to kick and throw her weight around and generally not be pleasant. So we did have our experimental limits. But certainly the old tach would start to show a lag next to the little digital wunderkind. So I whopped up to about 2k in neutral in the bucket.



I was too chicken to leave things that-away long enough to take pictures but I did put her in gear, hose running IN full blast. She whopped up to around 4k on the little digital guy. The hulking monster alongside stopped around 3k. The bucket was badly drained of cooling water so I had to stop things for the time being. So, just mebbe, in the Real World, *MS* is performing about as advertised. I'll have to get out on the water to know that.



At least, at idle and in neutral, there ain't no exhaust bubbles coming out of the prop hub. But put my thumb over the top-hole and everything changes. This is one of the suspected reverberation generators I have always suspected comes into play when putting a series of motors in a series of motor wells.

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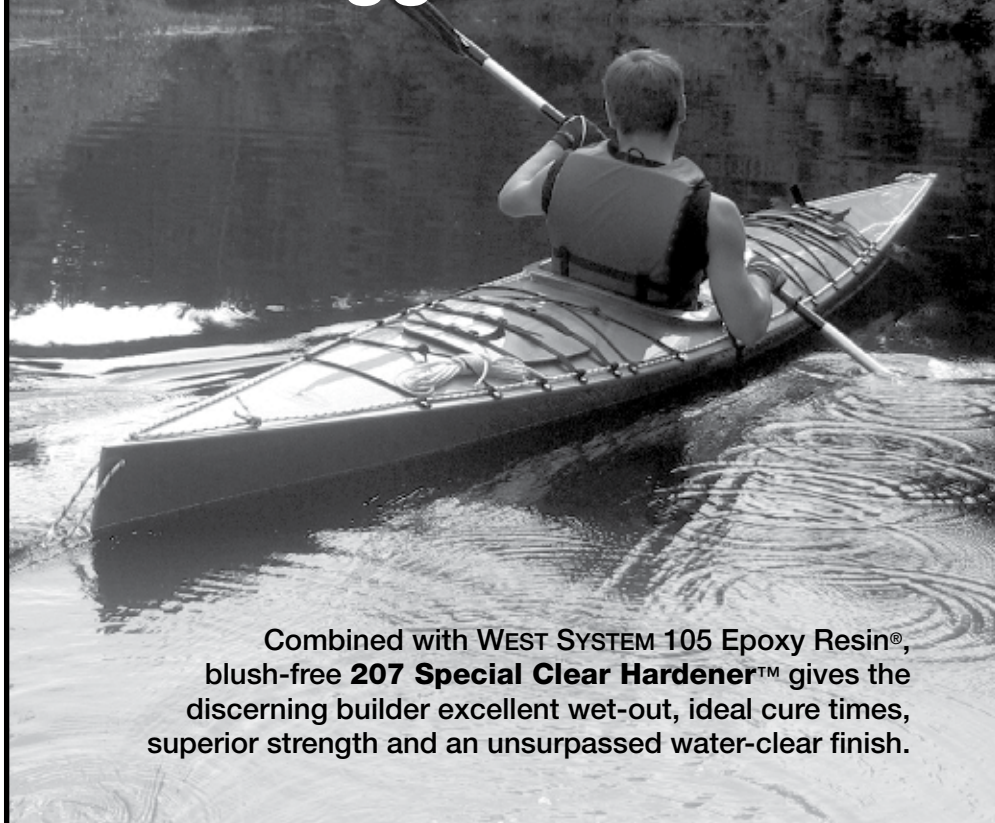


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Building the 13' Peapod in Quarantine

By Richard Honan

Well into mid April we're quarantined in our house with nowhere to go. Fortunately, I have been able to spend my quarantined days working by myself in the cellar of my old sign company. Due to the corona virus, the sign shop is closed and everyone has been furloughed.

I've laminated the frames and epoxied and copper riveted them in place (see May issue) and now can report on installing the inwales and spacer blocks and pouring the molten lead into the centerboard.

Installing the inwales requires lots of accurate cutting and fitting. I really could have used another pair of hands to get a 12' springy piece of mahogany lathered in slippery epoxy in place, but where there's a will, there's a way. I also scuffed up or lightly sanded the final coat of epoxy on the inside of the hull. My dog Lucky has been busy inspecting the work.

Next up was fabricating the laminated mahogany floor frames on which the floor boards will sit. The entire boat, inside and out, will be painted (TotalBoat Wet Edge). The only brightwork will be the varnished mahogany tiller and the mast and snorter (TotalBoat Marine Wood Finish, similar to Cetol).



Drilling the bung holes.



The black lines on the bungs tell my tired old eyes which way the grain is running.



Installing the inwales requires lots of accurate cutting and fitting.



Routing or easing the edges of the spacer blocks and the inwales. Eased edges are easier to paint, less chance of sanding through a sharp corner or edge. Radiused edges also don't dent as easy. Also less chance of denting people.



Scuffed up or lightly sanded (#100 grit) the final coat of epoxy on the inside of the hull.



Fabricating the laminated mahogany floor frames on which the floor boards will sit.



Clamps, did someone say clamps?



My dog Lucky has been busy inspecting the work.

Pouring Lead

By Richard Honan

I have been waiting for some warm spring weather to do some outside work on my 13' peapod boat building project. A day arrived that was perfect, relatively warm with calm winds, a good day to work outside and add some weight in the form of lead to the centerboard. Since the centerboard is okoume plywood, it floats. I need the centerboard to drop down as needed to keep the boat from sliding sideways when sailing upwind.

The idea is to rout out a pocket in the plywood centerboard and fill it with molten lead. I figured that I needed about five pounds of lead to cause the centerboard to sink. Now comes the math, a cubic foot (12"x12"x12") of lead weighs 708lbs. One square inch of lead, 1/2" thick weighs .204lbs. Based upon that info, I routed a pocket in the centerboard 4"x6"x1/8" deep, $.204 \times 24 = 4.908\text{lbs}$ (are you following this)?

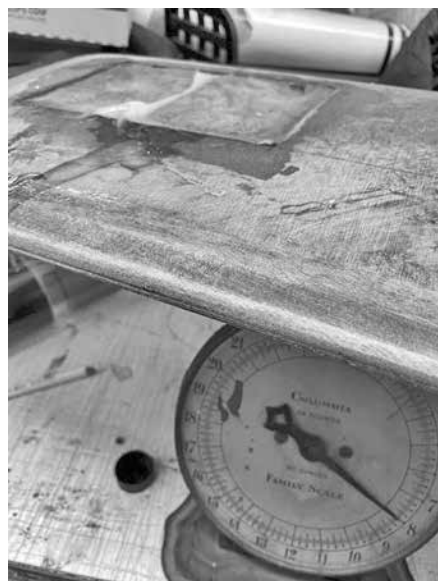
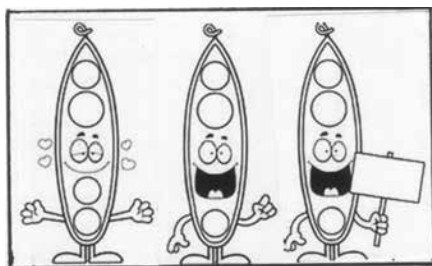
I grabbed a bunch of old lead fishing weights and some pickup buoy lead weights and weighed out 5lbs. I set up my turkey fryer and propane tank outside and placed the scrap lead in a cast iron pan. I gathered the safety gear, respirator with lead filters, goggles, face mask, heavy leather gloves and pot holders. Now the fun part, turn on the gas and set the burner to high. I put the cover on the cast iron pan and within a few minutes the solid lead was becoming a liquid. We're talking hot, real hot, well over 600°. A few minutes later the lead was completely in liquid form. I skimmed out any foreign material (pieces of fiberglass pickup buoy).

Next, I carefully picked up the cast iron pan and slowly poured the molten (621°) lead into the routed out cavity in the centerboard. WOW! It was like Dante's Inferno. The molten lead seemed to be boiling in the routed out cavity. The wood was charring. I was wondering if the 600°+ molten lead was going to burn right through the 1/8" thick bottom of the plywood cavity. Within ten minutes, Dante's Inferno started to cool down. A half an hour later it was warm to the touch.

After 45 minutes I picked up the centerboard, tipped it over and the 4"x6"x1/2" piece of solid lead fell out. This was fine. I mixed up some epoxy, added some silica thickener, brushed on a liberal coat of epoxy onto the piece of lead and the inside of the routed out cavity in the plywood centerboard, placed the lead ingot covered with epoxy into the cavity and left it to set up or harden over night.

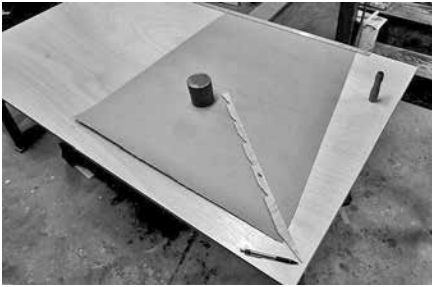
The last two photos were taken the next day with the lead now epoxied in place. I'll grind off the excess epoxy, continue filling the remaining 1/8" of the cavity and then cover both sides of the centerboard with a layer of 6oz fiberglass cloth and Totalboat 2:1 epoxy.

It was a fun project but, as my wife would say, "Very dangerous!"



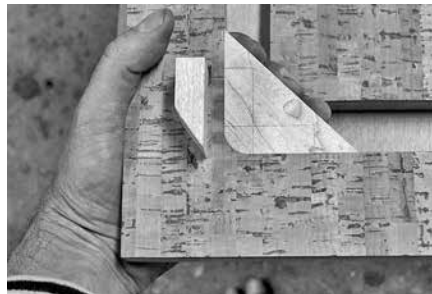
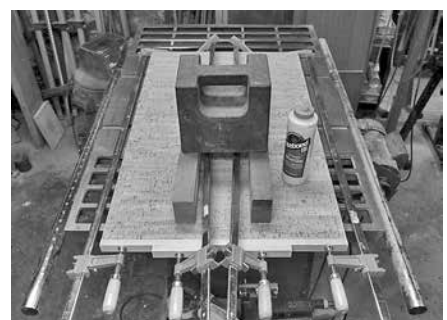
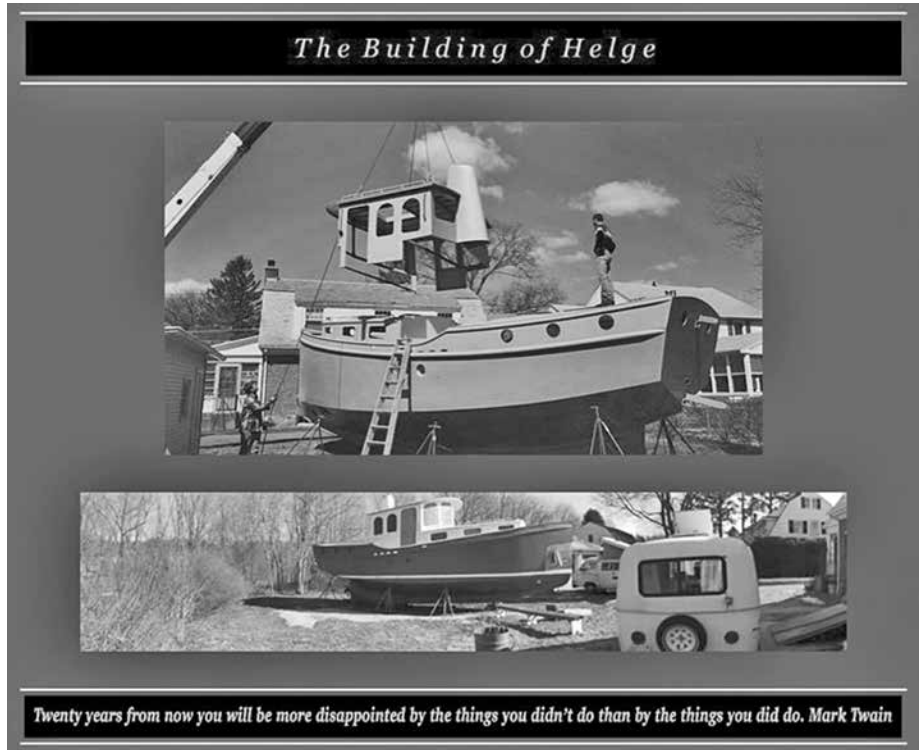
The Forward Sole Hatch

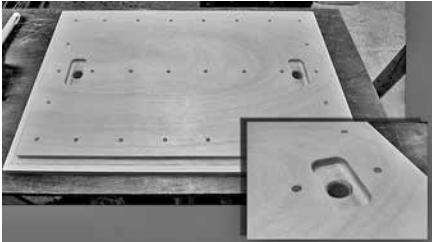
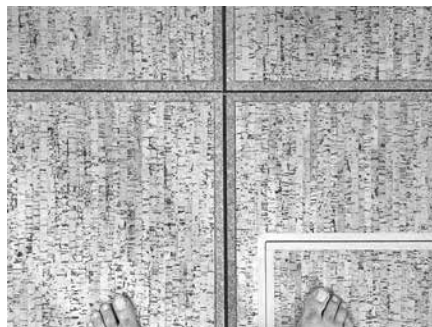
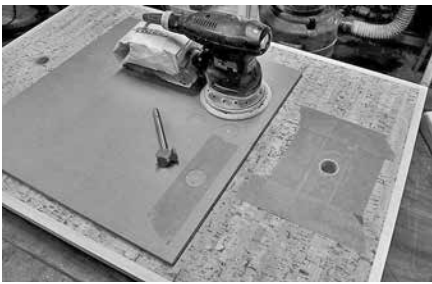
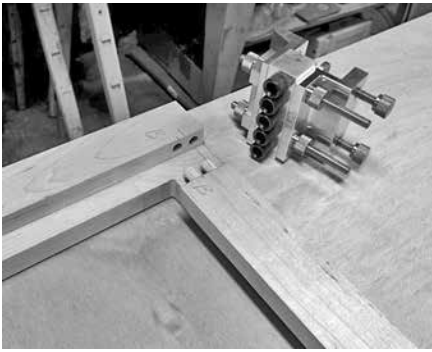
The main forward hatch is located at station 12. The hatch opening is 21"x32". The sole pieces are secured with flush strips of brass.



The Building of *Helge* A George Buehler Diesel Duck Part 10

Wendell Gallagher is building a Buehler Diesel Duck 38. He had the steel hull built at a yard and trucked to his home and is doing the rest himself.





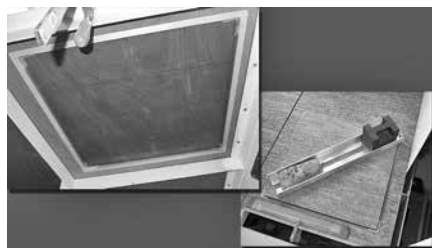
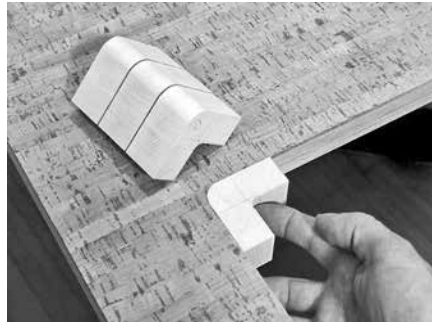
The Wheelhouse Sole

Because of the relatively small Captain's Chair footprint and the need for a sturdy base, I increased the wheelhouse sole thickness to 1". The cork seams are secured with flush strips of brass.

Mr Daisy's sport suspension held up well to his first heavy wood haul, 500lbs of okoume plywood scarcely dropped the ride.



Tracing the wavy bulkhead edge.



The piano hinge is solid brass (not plated steel).



The harth hinges forward allowing for easier step access from the side. When opened, the hatch will attach to the Captain's Chair.



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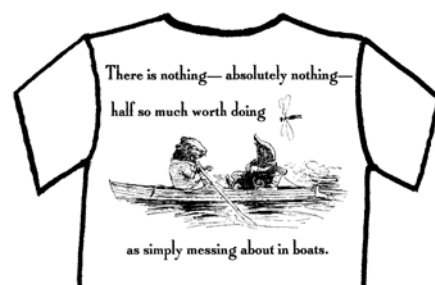
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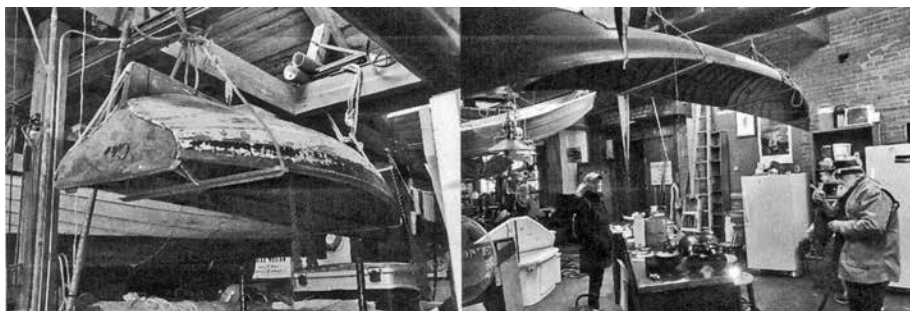
from 5:00 pm Fridays, at UCONN Avery Point Boat house Building 36

Next Meeting: Sunday, September 8th at 12:30 pm

Potluck with Meeting to follow at UCONN Avery Point Boathouse Bldg. 36

Local: www.JGTSCA.org www.facebook.com/JGTSCA

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A Visit to Steve Jones' "Crows Nest"

By Bill Rutherford

On March 8 Sharon Brown, Carl Kaufman and I visited Steve Jones. We viewed the original *Che* that Steve, Zell Steever and George Maynard rowed up the river to the first Rowing Workshop. George's son has a copy by Andy Giblin they plan to use this year to recreate the row. They are looking for a derby.

Richard Brown, illustrator of Steve's book *Breakwaters* in which the chapter about rowing to the first Workshop first appeared, drew from photographs, he is looking for the originals. The text describes three individuals in the boat, Richard included only two. Artistic license, he says. Steve says, "They threw me out of the boat."

We viewed other boats and memorabilia in Steve's storage area, his "Crows Nest" at Steamboat Wharf, hidden away behind the Engine Room restaurant. Boats included a beautiful blue "Long Lake" boat, a fine lined, plumb stemmed rowing boat which appeared to be first cousin to an Adirondack Guideboat, an actual Adirondack Guideboat with natural spruce crook ribs painted all over a dull, neutral gray and a long, heavy, metal Whitehall style boat which once had an engine. All hanging upside down from the ceiling.

Plus a beautifully restored 20' + Thames River skiff for two oarsmen and a cox. Carl

really liked that one. We strategized on how to get it out of the building but decided it would be best viewed in situ surrounded by all the colorful nautical artifacts.

There were other boats, a lightweight pram with canvas transoms, a couple of new, or at least freshly painted, flat-bottomed skiffs, a Carousel horse and shelves of spare lines, signal flags and large signs advertising Schooner Wharf and the Boat Stuff Nautical Consignment store.

The real treat, however, was listening to Carl and Steve talk about reclaiming Mystic River and Block Island harbors in the '70s and '80s from waste and pollution and controlling growth all while growing a nascent shellfish aquaculture industry. Perhaps they will repeat the conversation for all of us someday. It is a wonderful testimony to how far we have come from the Mystic River turning red and blue as they dyed American flags at the head of the river.

Thinking forward to celebrating 50 years since John Gardner's first Rowing Workshop, we considered some ideas for June's Small Craft Workshop. Steve offered his downriver boatyard as a destination for the Sunday morning row which will be an excellent place to share some coffee and donuts as well as an atmospheric locale to share

stories about the original gathering as well as ones since. Perhaps a discussion led by Carl and Steve on future use of rivers and bays for aquaculture and how to make that happen. Perhaps a reprint of Steve's account of rowing to the first Rowing Workshop including some further contemporaneous observations and photographs from the day.

All in all, it was a delightful Sunday afternoon spent in Steve's collection of memorabilia, inspecting old boats, interesting artifacts and making plans to share memories and enthusiasms with others at our upcoming John Gardner Small Craft Workshop.

Plus it was an opportunity to hear some new Steve Jones' quips:

"It was a three day blow, as they used to say, that moved the sandy point by the lighthouse 50 yards down the shore, which was better than the high school football team did that year."

"Rereading something I've written is like getting back into a wet bathing suit. You get warmed up but it takes a while."

"There are no 'Jesus Boards' in my marina."

Matt McKenzie's Sailor's Skills Class Visits the Community Boathouse

By Bill Rutherford

A big "Thank You" to all who participated in excellent presentations at the Community Boathouse on February 17. And thanks to our support group, Dan Nelson, John Hacunda, Bill Armitage and Bob Andrie. The students will long remember:

Carl Kaufman explaining the two ways to build a boat, from a log or a pile of planks.

Brian Cooper's journey from first kayak to fabric on frame to current plank on frame skiff.

Henk Hoets' detailed description of measuring and documenting boats, both by hand and with computer assistance.

Peter Vermilya taking us through the evolution of fishing craft from shallops to schooners.

Some of the best interaction occurred after the talks as we mixed and mingled around the exhibits and examples. The students seemed genuinely interested in what we are about. I expect a few will reach out for further involvement. Maybe even take on the white skiff as an end of term project. Everyone's efforts over the last month or so definitely paid off.

This from Matt: "Please allow me to add my thanks to Bill's for today. I thought the presentations were fantastic and, like Bill, the post presentations even more important. I saw eyes opening, questions coming out and understandings becoming more clear. Thank you all for your time and expertise. I will follow up about a trip to the boat shed and, more importantly, will encourage them to continue their interest in the JGTSCA. You made boat building come alive today, thank you!"

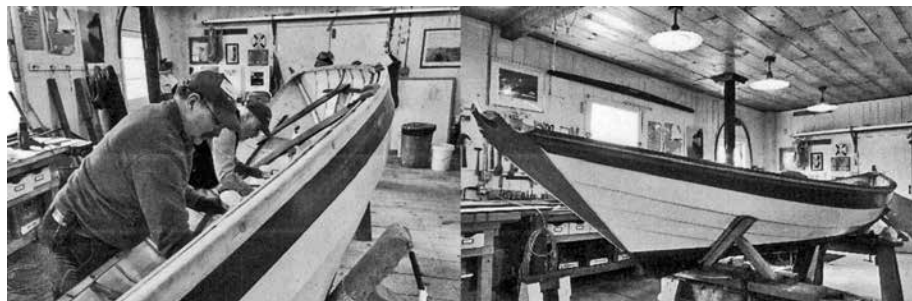


Mystic Seaport's Boat Livery

Before the Seaport Museum went into "Dormant Mode" due to the current health emergency, some progress was made.

March 12 was our last volunteer day at the Boathouse. Dane Rochelle was leading us. He stayed on as staff the week following, working on *Captain Hook* and *Dion*. They hauled *Breck* late the following week. Dane scraped and partially painted the bottom as well as the centerboard and rudder. He was impressed by how much "water" she draws, more than he is tall. Doug Butler completed painting the bottom and launched her this past Monday. She is in the water at the Boathouse awaiting topside painting, etc.

Captain Hook (a Whitehall yacht tender) is painted and ready for hardware. *Dion* (a Swampscot dory) interior and rails (they were wooded) are complete, topside and bottom paint remain. Good Little Skiff *Waldo Howland* is outside resplendent in his fresh bright yellow topsides (original colors). *Mary* (a popular flat-bottomed skiff), *Mimi* (a Chaisson Dory skiff), *Fenwick* (a Riverside Yacht Club catboat) and *Idler* (a lovely Lawley tender) are also complete and ready for service at the upcoming 50th Anniversary John Gardner Small Craft Workshop.



Dan Nelson and Steve Telsey apply a fresh coat of primer to interior of *Dion*.



For those who know there is simply nothing better than messing about in small boats.

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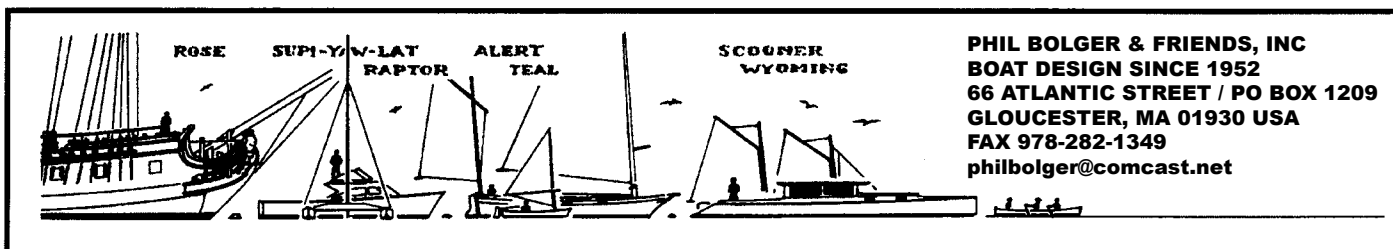
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Phil Bolger & Friends on Design

Design Column #548 in MAIB Design #530 *Newfoundlander* (Part 2)

29'0"x8'3"x3'6" 408sf (+130sf)x9,300lbs
 Long-Keel Catboat

Charlie Ballou had collected a fine stash of black locust in all sorts of boat building correct lengths, thicknesses and favorable naturally grown geometries. *Wood-Hand-books* refer to black locust (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*) as spread across central and eastern US, a hardwood growing up to 65'-100' tall on a 2'-3' trunk, yielding wood of high density and hardness and high durability due to its decay resistance. It has moderate blunting effects on cutting edges and steam bends, glues and finishes well.

Lots of uses for fence posts, flooring, mine timbers, railroad ties, and more, including boat building. Top notch in American tree species, it is deemed a very hard and strong wood, competing with hickory as the strongest, stiffest timber, however, with more stability and rot resistance. Cost in black locust country apparently compares with that of white oak, however, with Charlie's more or less free (if you ignore the cost of tree cutting and collecting the pieces).

Interestingly enough, like a few other friendly looking boat building trees in your neighborhood such as cedar, black locust also may harm the human body from eye and skin irritation to the possibly triggering episodes of nausea, with some folks having no reaction at all. Clearly important to read the fine print on trees you see becoming your boat.

Charlie Ballou had learned that Canadian truckers hauling fish, lobster, timber, industrial goods, etc south to the US would often return back north half empty. So he organized a workable way to get his boatload of black locust up to his distant boat builder, the Henry Vokey Shipyard in Trinity in the southeast of Newfoundland, where she got built, as Phil reported in Chapter 32 of his 1994 *Boats With An Open Mind*.

As already touched on in the last issue on *Newfoundlander*, Charlie's interests and Phil's response produced these particular attributes in that design of 1988. The 3'6" deep long keel putting her 2,520lbs of lead ballast over 3' down, that bow length ahead of the mast to slice the waves, along with that 32' tall unstayed solid tree mast supporting 408sf of a single gaff sail indeed suggest use in waters that are typically deeper, with bold rocky shores to stay away from under good sized reliable single hander sail power, meaning good pointing capability, comfortable sea motion.

Not much interest in shooting bridges or exploring tidal salt marshes, of which there seem to be just about none in that remarkably rugged cruising neighborhood of a lot of long and short but deep fjords, bays and countless smaller islands, even the appearance of estuaries without rivers to carve them, all on apparently just around 4' of tides. In comparison,

the Bay of Fundy hundreds of miles away to the southwest between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick has many multiples of that.

Apparently referred to as The Rock, the island of Newfoundland measures 320 miles north to south and 330 west to east, with St John's, at 115,000 folks, the largest community, another 30 miles further east than Trinity. The Rock's actual measured coastline is cited as over 6,000 miles (!) or 9,656km in length. But it takes 950 nautical miles to do the fast non stop no landfall way around this rocky and wooded island with its spectacular coastal and even higher inland elevations of up to 2,600', one distinct half of the Canadian Province Newfoundland and Labrador (Newfoundland).

As we are charting this dramatic coastline for best passage by *Newfoundlander*, we will get distracted by the task of having to choose which course to take around the legal peculiarity of the two modest islands of Saint Pierre and Miquelon, being just 11-13 miles off the south coast but under French jurisdiction next to an Anglophile Province, the home of English speaking Royalists fleeing the American Revolution in New England. Ninety-three square miles in size together, these two islands' population seceded from the United Kingdom in 1814, today adding up to some 6,000 folks still under the French Tricolore.

Cruising Guides, though, should offer routines on whether to go between Newfoundland and these two islands or well off outside to respect tender territoriality, after all it seems classified as a devolved parliamentary dependency indeed governed by French President Emmanuel Macron. No wonder that France has the largest legally recognized ocean square mileage of the EEZ/ Exclusive Economic Zone on this globe once we and the UN add up every claimed rock and atoll from the Mediterranean over the Atlantic to the vast Pacific.

Newfoundlander was being built in a yard that typically produced rugged but plain fishing craft, her plain construction was and is an obvious lower cost option to get a custom boat built to a reasonable budget. Clean, plain and solid but without frills and for long life with as much of Charlie's black locust as possible, held together with bronze no less!

Yes, for the prejudiced who associate his name with at times extreme plywood designs, it is certain that Phil Bolger drew these lines, one of many such actually in his 680 designs deep archive, many more indeed than any plywood based shapes. As Design #530 she reflects the seasoned experience

of then some 36 years of design work with many such complex hull geometry construction projects, including to his own budget as his near double ended Live Aboard Design #312, *Resolution* at 48'x11', our 50hp 20kts outboard utility #518 *Shivaree* at 16'x7' and again reflected later in the pulling boat #600 *Spur-II*, measuring 15'4"x4'6", this time built in glued lapstrake plywood planking to add up to about 100lbs of weight for cartopping.

As Phil emphasized periodically with some satisfaction, a lower hull construction man hours count may have a lot to do with a finely sculpted hull shape. Again and again he found that for traditional wooden construction, carefully designing a hull's lines will see many planks almost fall into place naturally. Particularly the hull ends should be designed to offer gentle curves without dictating any tight bends just where both the planking stock and the boat builder alike least like those thoughtless impositions, such as in too many typical short and wide catboats' blunt bows, an error he tried to avoid even in his own traditional catboat designs, such as with the elegant lines of the 15'x7'1" #280 *Harbinger* gaff catboat.

Newfoundlander, first on paper, then emerging on the shop floor and finally afloat in the flesh, indeed offers such easy lines with a touch of a hollow waterline forward, gentle turns of the bilge, with a fine exit, overall a conservative approach to the task of managing long Atlantic swells and confused chop around impressive cliffs, of course, not a great trick on these untypical catboat hull proportions of 29'x8'3" or 3.5 length by one beam. You will remember that Hull Geometry Lecture in that Fisheries Report published in the December 2019 and January 2020 issues.

The build was tracked with a good number of pictures, point and shoot camera fashion, constrained as usual by the tight quarters of a commercial boat building shed where she got started with her keel laid right in a very tight spot right next to another nearly completed hull soon to leave, opening up space for this hull to be assembled.

White gloved sharp penciled efficiency experts and OSHA folks will wish to have their own wisdom imparted on the Vokey approach to commercial wooden boat building, despite that yard having built many hundreds of boats that way, clearly successful, serving primarily the working waterfront of that Province, mostly commercial fishing craft.

The pictures on this project speak for themselves. Looking at *Newfoundlander's* sweet traditional lines of an all around moderate set of hull proportions, lots of thoughts blossom soon on how a gaff schooner rig might look on her, a gaff cutter rig, a plain gaff sloop, perhaps a yawl and these likely fully

stayed with a tabernacle or two, supported by galvanized chainplates and all even more “salty” to feed yet another set of aesthetics.

For cruising the Canadian Maritime Provinces and New England I’d explore doing a solid well proportioned bolt on dog-house pickup truck cap style to stretch the supply of dry clothing substantially farther. And, of course, in our 8.5’ to 12.5’ tides here in Gloucester, she would seem a challenge from our shallow draft perspective, except that her rugged long keel draft of 3’6” is actually much less than many of our local yachts. So Phil learned to warn following deeper draft yachts when his 2’8” draft 48’ *Resolution* could cut corners across shallows he knew they could not.

However, *Resolution* was designed for, and did indeed settle more or less upright on, the muddy cove bottom of her home berth along the floats once the tide left her, something that would require creative use of and a fair bit of experience with “legs” to leave *Newfoundlander* settle reasonably upright in such conditions, particularly if uninhabited. Of course, that challenge has been addressed all over the place with patience and on hopefully softer bottoms to not see the turn of her bilge get damaged by settling in a 40° heel right onto a sharp rock after all, some of these seem to grow through the soft bottom overnight.

As usual, managing a hard dinghy is a matter for serious discussion. One will fit behind her mast, however, never quite ready for sudden use as a towed one would be, apart from blocking the view forward from her cockpit. So, for offshore passages she’d carry it upside down on her raised deck, but then towed in coastal waters, nothing much new here. Or would we get ingenious and hang one off a davit above and behind the transom hung outboard rudder? Ever so “salty!” Whatever the choice, a decent looking color coordinated dinghy seems called for to match her overall appearance.

Before that project though, more on this saga around Design #530 *Newfoundlander* in the next issue. Here are some of the construction pictures as they were taken in informal point and shoot camera fashion:



#2. The first stage of her construction, laying her keel in a narrow slot between shed wall and another project yet to be finished and shoved outside. To get the Vokey crew off to a flying start Charlie had cast the 2520lbs lead keel himself and sent it up east northeast.



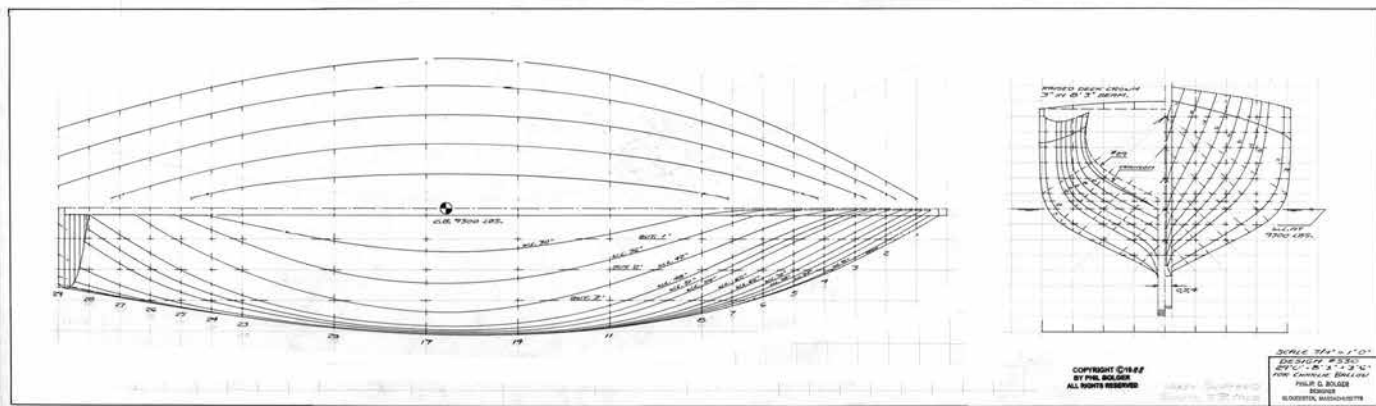
#3. Here a closer view of the stem and keel assembly growing out of the lead keel, pulled together by bronze rodding. Not easily visible on the after end, the lower layer of her keel assembly is already reaching aft where eventually the rudder’s lower pintle/gudgeon assembly will attach to the hull. And that other hull gives you a sense of the no non-sense work the Vokey’s had cultivated.



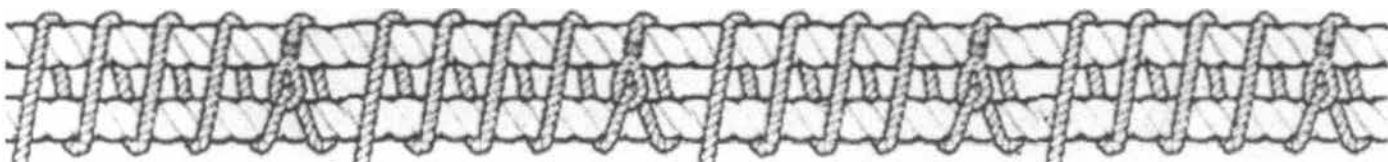
#4. Her bone structure emerging, with her keel timbers assembly likely painted in white lead to extend the life of the structure further. And quite visible sawn frame assemblies with a lower and an upper frame piece out of Charlie’s stash connected via bronze bolts joined halfway up. Each of her frame pairs different but all looking trustworthy in black locust joined by bronze. The more or less horizontal ribbands help align the frames vertically as that “ribcage” emerges.

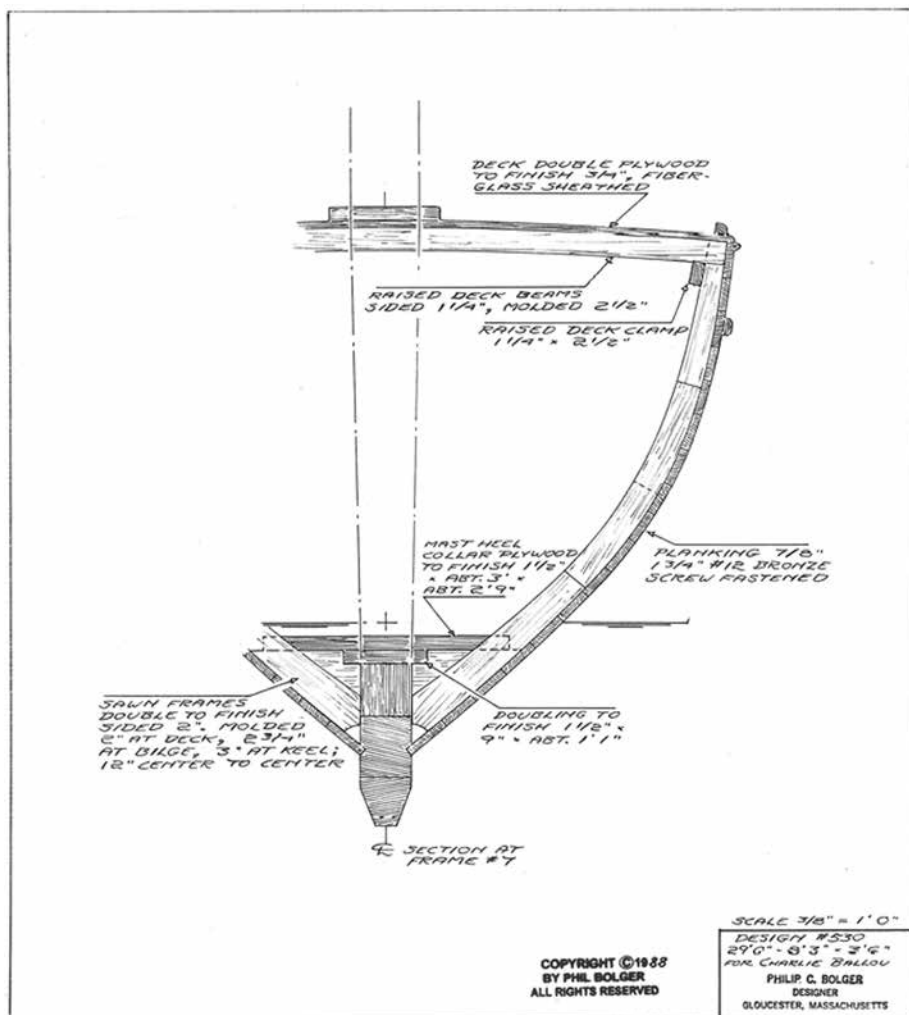


#5. And what was just carefully designed black ink on white paper lines and curves on Phil’s plans for #530 has been translated into three dimensions, the basics of her hull shape from now on. Lots to study in this traditional building method that is unlikely to ever not be used for boat building, indeed a very green low carbon way to build a craft with young trees growing now to eventually be used to repair this or for another hull in 30-40 years from now to replace this one.



#1. But first her lines. It does not get much more traditional than these lines. Easy entry, a gentle mid section ready for aligning natural bends in that black locust to then piece them together to assemble her bone structure of sawn frames, all on the backbone of a moderate 3’6” long keel.





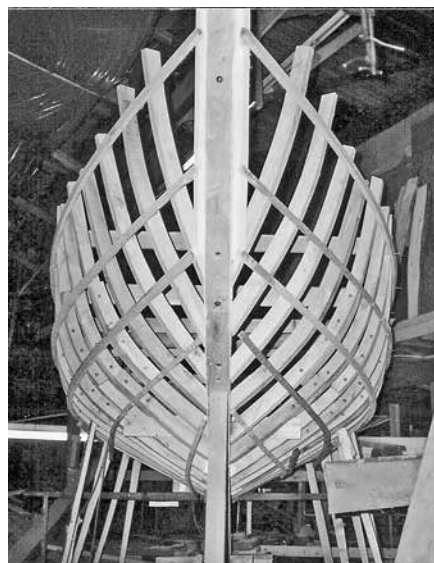
#6. Phil's notes on the plans, such as this excerpt, lay it all out, ready for the competent builder to get on with building her, whether in the late 1980s or perhaps 200 years into the future.



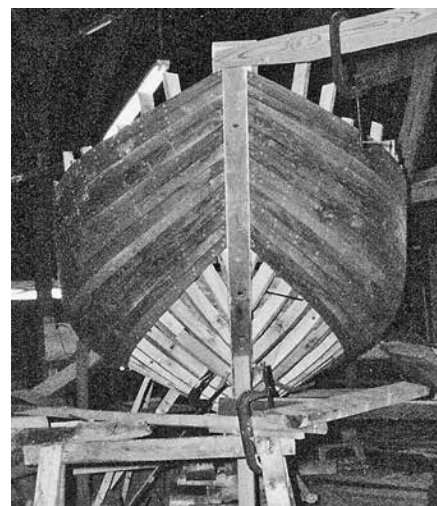
#7. Seeing her insides may get the true traditional wooden boat folks all excited, as it should. Black locust, still shiny bronze fasteners everywhere, all in a delicious hull shape. No mysteries what you are getting and how to track any damage and eventual decay for replacement one piece at a time.



#8. More of the same in her stern assembly, a solid knee to brace the transom which is none too thin either. Everything indeed bronze bolted together. That piece of ply likely a knee rest.



#9. That is what we are talking about, a sight to greet the owners' eyes as they entered the shop. Never mind the irregular locations of the horizontal ribbands as they are just bracing and will come off as her planking begins to grow towards each length. The ribbands should already tell you now whether you've made a mistake building those frames, causing unintended bumps or hollows.



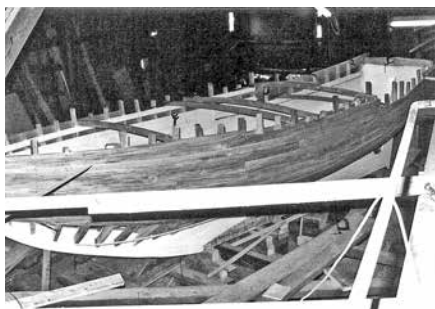
#10. This grainier image makes that point with the advancing planking really locking in her final shape for good, progressing one layer of planking back and forth port and starboard to keep her more or less symmetric, never closing just one side in. Here is the proof of how good your framing was towards getting both sides of her the same shape indeed.



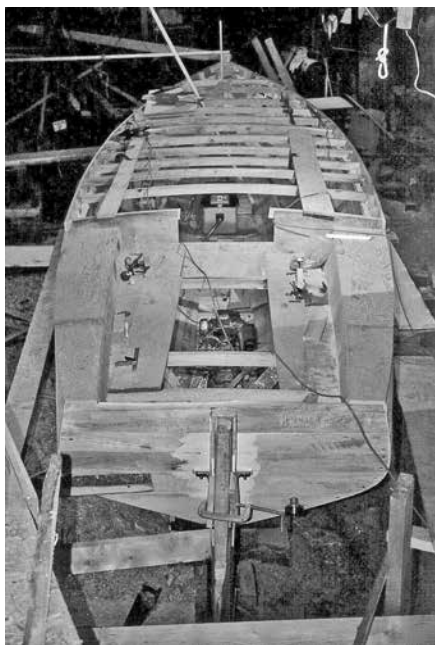
#11. A fair amount going on. Good to study these basics, including the planked up transom with no plywood in her hull structure yet. That propeller aperture will be nicely faired, with that small shiny two blader bronze prop resting on that stern blocking awaiting shafting, bearings and eventually the Diesel engine.



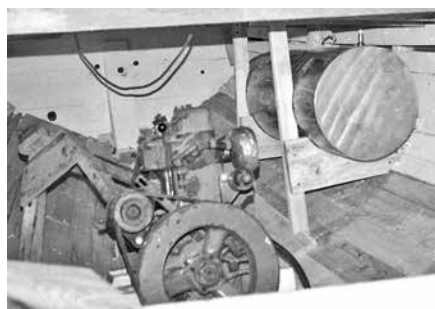
#12. Another angle on her port stern quarter with that staging below to support the planking gang and in the distance the horizontal brace between hull and the shed's uprights to keep the hull as vertical as we'd want. Since she is a raised deck type, the planking shows the break in her deck ahead of her cockpit.



#13. As the flat braces are removed between her frame pairs, her arched deck beams are going in, but not before the wide open hull interior had allowed the easy installation of a plain wooden ceiling over inside faces of her framing, also bronze screwed, but now only painted white to lean against.



#14. Finally, as already noted in Phil's notes on her structure earlier, it is plywood over those deck beams for structure of the cockpit, all eventually sheathed with fiberglass and epoxy to keep the fresh water from ruining that fine structure inside her. Apart from a few romantics still refusing this technology today, most wooden boat builders did come to adopt this modern approach to decking a traditional hull structure decades ago to simply protect their work quite a few extra years. And who needs water dripping on their mattress, ruining books, into their lap even, experiences that moved Phil to cover his strip planked cedar deck on his 48' live-aboard *Resolution* with just a single layer of $\frac{1}{4}$ " ply and fiberglass in epoxy to keep things below dry for good. Yes, Phil was on an anti-plywood trip for a few, until he recovered, in good part because that cutting edge seam compound failed soon and aggravatingly to prompt these repairs some 12 years after her launching. She is over 40 years now.



#15. The alert eyeball already noted in the previous picture the arrival of that single cylinder hand starting VOLVO Diesel good for maybe 10hp.



#16. Bottom paint on, topsides looking good, and the rudder is fitted with bronze gudgeons and pintle to her stern. You'll notice that this rough cut piece of wood with its bark still on is indeed bolted through her fresh transom with one of those nice bronze bolts to help keep her standing vertically while her bottom planking is unobstructed for fairing, caulking, putting that engine seacock through the planking and finally for painting. This is a commercial yard at work where every hour counts, discouraging getting all "precious" about moving fine supports this way and that umpteen times for these jobs. So a working craft may find an extra hole in the transom soon bunged and painted over for good in time for launching. After all, Charlie knew the guys.



#17. Yes, this is owner Charlie Ballou in the boat poking up between the deckbeams with builder Henry Vokey on that staging plank giving us some scale. Good idea that photo.



#19. Time for that double $\frac{3}{8}$ " plywood decking to go over those lovely deck beams, ply just thin enough to allow a modest bit of torturing it into that compound plane of curved deck beams and fine sheer line arc, something not doable with thicker plywood. Two layers in epoxy and with fiberglass cloth over everything not only keeps fresh water induced rot out, but adds substantially to her structural strength.



#18. And here the next picture available, soon after launching summer of 1989. With bronze portholes but still temporary plywood hatch covers, something that Charlie could tend to, as he also would see to building her mast, boom, gaff. That summer she puttered around the local waters just under power.



#20. Henry Vokey's personal 60' top sail fisherman schooner named *J&B*, built in 1985, a seeming luxury, except as the yard owner he had the manpower, the building infrastructure for such a substantial effort and, of course, ready access to the materials, likely much of the hardware already on hand used or new at favorable terms. She would be sold by 1994 to serve as a tour boat out of St John's until 2001, strutting her good lines and those eight sails and may now be in private hands in Florida.

Finally, as a footnote, while Phil had referred to her as a nail fastened hull, she was actually planked up with bronze screws as well, a simple project for a coastal cruiser, and yet first class structurally.

Today we can explore elements of the history of the now defunct Vokey Yard of Trinity, Newfoundland, via online Newfoundland Boatbuilding resources. And there we will run across yet another fisheries related hard edged reality, this time in Canada. We've already spent so much time in *MAIB* discussing New England dramatics. Now you'll learn that between Canadian regulations dictating short and fat hull geometries and fishermen wanting even more boat for the length, the Vokeys, along with so many other yards in the Canadian Maritime Provinces, would be asked to build a fishing fleet with amongst the fattest hull geometries conceivable here on the North American continent at nearing 2:1 length:beam ratio.

How these most extreme shapes could be built in wood reminds one of medieval hull shapes so arduously assembled, e.g., in north-west Europe to match crudest by the foot hull length port taxation schemes with short blunt hulls, even then already distorting a commercial fleet to convenience some myopic bureaucrats. Eventually this increasingly implausible torturing of wood AND boat builders led to these shapes primarily being built in fiberglass, often to massive scantlings likely making these hulls near immortal.

And then eastern Canada ran out of the lucrative cod stock. The northern cod biomass dropped below 1% of earlier levels and cod fishing off these ravenous killing machines got shut down with the Cod Fisheries Moratorium of 1992. Online references will quote that major factors contributing to the depletion of cod stocks off Newfoundland were the introduction of powerful

And Now About That Newfoundland Fishery

trawlers and modern fish hunting electronics that allowed fishermen to trawl larger areas to greater depths for much longer. And that depleted cod stock much faster than nature could replenish.

While that Moratorium of 1992 was supposed to last some two years, the overfishing turned out to have done such massive damage to the ecosystem supporting cod that even today, by 2020, it has yet to recover with that cod fisheries remaining pretty much closed 28 years later. With the cod collapse came the collapse of building boats fishing for cod, with many boat builders on and around Newfoundland shutting down, with building crews struggling to find other uses for their skills, such as in the house building trades.

However, this far away from major population centers in these widely scattered sparsely populated hamlets along that rugged shoreline this was a very dramatic socio economic disruption courtesy of the Canadian Government failing to control the fisheries and fishers going way too far in their catch ambitions not planning much ahead. No doubt a lot of hard feelings to go around for now well over one human generation, including blaming foreign flagged boats as culprits.


Clearly a case of regulators and fishing industry collaborating way too closely until inevitably triggering the collapse of that scheme. Certain parallels to the story

from the New England ground fisheries are hard to ignore. What both Canadian and US American regulators did fail, then in early '90s and still fail to understand today, is that their dictate of uneconomical short and fat fishing craft unarguably adds to the pressure to fish more and harder to somehow cover those unnecessarily uneconomic operational costs, along with jacking up various get rich quick temptations.

Left to their own perspective, the Henry Vokey Boat Yard did prove with the building of, for instance, *Newfoundlander* 1988-89, but more importantly so Vokey's own beautiful classic 60' Fisherman Schooner Yacht in 1985 that they could build elegant leaner far more efficient and seaworthy shapes. Alas, between the joint failure to control each other, a responsibility shared by Canadian regulators and the fishing industry, the Vokey Boat Yard got wiped out as well, today just a distant memory as an entry in a museum record, however, a much closer, more painful one within these boat building families thrown into unemployment in remote places where not much more opportunities beyond fishing and boat building could exist any time soon.

Today, in these parts elements of aquaculture perhaps, tourism here and there, with lots of younger folks off island as far away as the Alberta oil sands and fishing (building?) in British Columbia a continent away. An arbitrarily dark chapter of policy and ethics failures. Perhaps one should erect a monument to such catastrophic "Leaders'." One could find a spot here in Gloucester for ours.

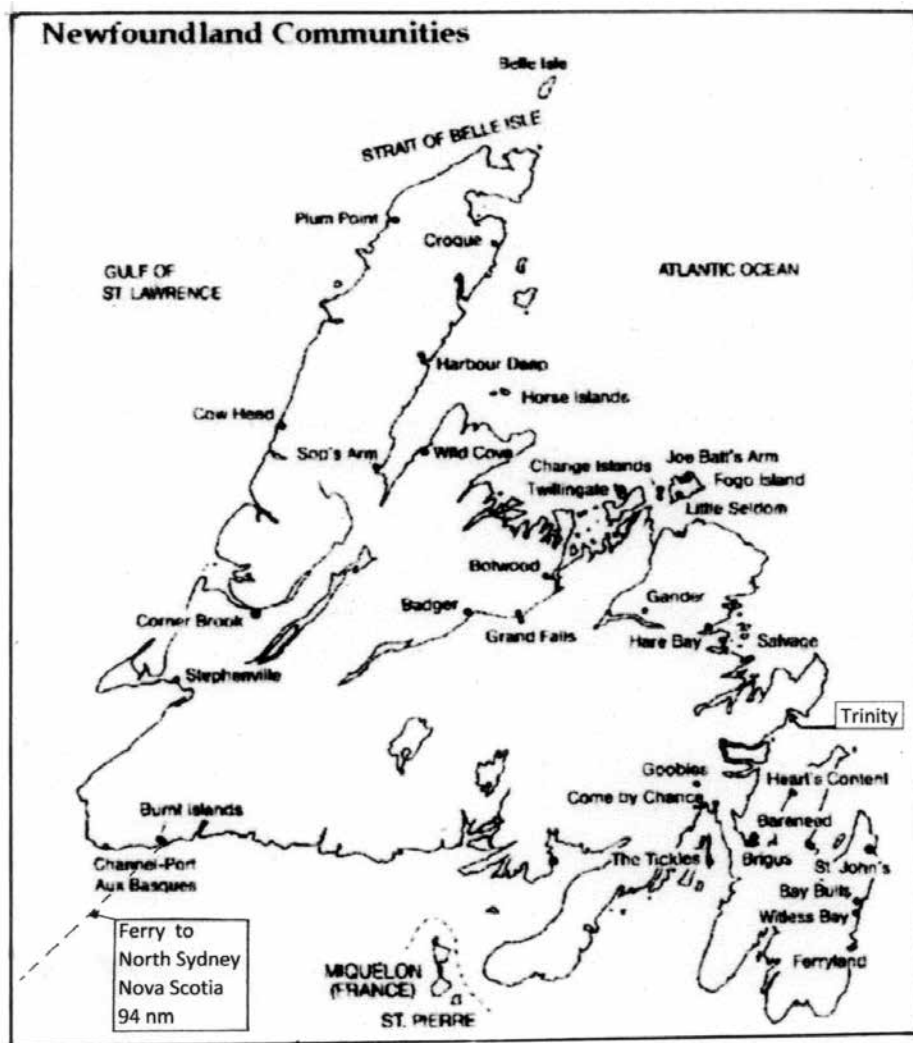
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My shoes seem to wear out before the shoelaces. Hence, I have a collection of shoelaces. I find them very handy as “small stuff” to secure a coil of line or an electric power cord. I sometimes wonder what their breaking point is (especially the newer ones) but have not seen a study on the subject.

On a trip to pick up a boat, the nut on the trailer hitch ball came loose and fell off (in spite of a locking washer). The safety chains held and the skeg kept the threaded part of the ball off the road. But I did not have a spare nut for the ball. I installed the 7/8” ball and went carefully on to my destination. None of the auto stores in the area sold just the nut so I ended up with a new 2” ball. Once I returned to Tallahassee with the boat (a small Wharram catamaran) disassembled to fit on the 30’ flatbed trailer, I obtained a suitable nut from the local trailer dealer and then had a spare 2” ball for use.

I usually stop about ten miles down the road to check on the boat and trailer when I am towing. This time I had not made the check towing the empty trailer and had the problem. After that event I would check the nut tightness on the trailer ball using my wrench while checking on how well the boat was riding on the trailer and that all the tie downs were still tight.

My garage door motor has a mechanical setting for when the door is fully opened or fully closed. The settings are easy to adjust. The gate opener has electrical settings and, while easy to do, requires taking off the cover and pushing certain buttons in a required sequence to position the gate all the way open or all the way closed. My Sisu 26 had both electrical settings and mechanical settings for certain devices to operate correctly. One of my “before leaving the float” checklist items was to make sure that all the electrical and mechanical items were in their proper position and working. Otherwise something was sure to fail when out on the water.

Do you have a deck of plastic covered playing cards on your boat? I had a deck in my go bag on the boat as well as a deck of cards in the car. Before the days of mobile



From the Lee Rail

By C. Henry Depew

connections, if things went wrong and you were anchored waiting for help (or at the side of the road waiting for AAA (the vehicle help people), a deck of cards was a nice way to spend some time. Of course, we had reading material but a card game involving everyone in a mutual activity helped spend the time.

Another item on the boat that was very important in the summertime was a fly swatter. How the flies found a boat anchored a couple of miles offshore is one of those research questions no one has followed up on. In any event, the fly swatter was of great use and its presence on the boat was one of my “checklist” items before we went out on the water.

When we towed our Sisu 22 to the coast and back on weekends I always checked the boat’s batteries before we left the house. When we left the boat on the lift at Shell Point, the condition of the batteries became a different consideration. Since the battery for my 1970 Cadillac hearse was the same as those in the boat for the 100hp Perkins diesel, if necessary, I would carry the car’s battery down to the boat and put the weaker boat battery on the pier and set up the low amp battery charger on the weak battery. The car’s battery went into the boat and all was ready to start the engine and charge both boat batteries while running on the water. When we were ready to head back to Tallahassee, the recharged boat battery was put back in the boat and the car battery back in the car. Since this was a lot of work, I installed a 110v boat battery trickle charger on the boat (proper grounding and all that) and no longer needed to move the heavy batteries around. Using the hearse’s battery to run the

boat on occasion worked, but it was not a good long term solution.

Both of our Sisu boats had large cockpits and high sides, so getting back onboard from the water was not possible without assistance. I put a swim platform with a boarding ladder on the smaller boat and had a folding aluminum ladder for the bigger boat. In both cases, there was room inside for the dogs (Golden Retrievers) and little chance of them going overboard. It was always a possibility, however, and the need for a harness was considered more than once. Thus it was nice to see where someone had figured out a way to put a water activated MOB device on a dog’s collar (how well the device would work underwater was not mentioned). Getting the dog back on board may still be a problem, but you will know where the dog is in the water, which would be a great help in the retrieval.

I installed two large fuel filters on our Sisu 22. One was for water and the other was for contaminants of various sorts. Unfortunately the filters provided enough resistance to the fuel flow that if I ran the Perkins Diesel at maximum rpm, the engine did not get enough fuel and quit. At lower speeds all was well. Restarting the diesel required bleeding each fuel injector, which was a messy operation and not fun on the water. Once I figured out that the mechanical fuel pump was not adequate for high speed, I replaced the mechanical pump with an electric fuel pump (with its own switch) and all was well. The Westerbeke Diesel in our Sisu 26 came with an electric fuel pump that started when I turned on the ignition key.

After reading about boat and car engine fires that seemed to be made worse by the electric fuel pump still running after the engine died (the power to the pump was still on), I considered installing a separate switch for the fuel pump but decided that since I was aware of the potential problem, I would be turning off the engine switch (and thus the fuel pump) at the first sign of smoke from the Diesel’s engine cover.

The Tancook Whaler *Vernon Langaille* tromping along on the Mystic River, June 1987



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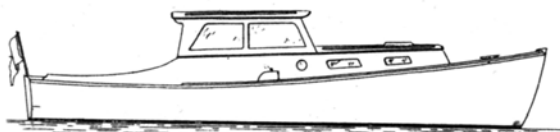
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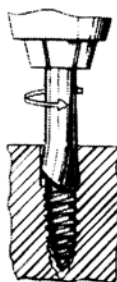
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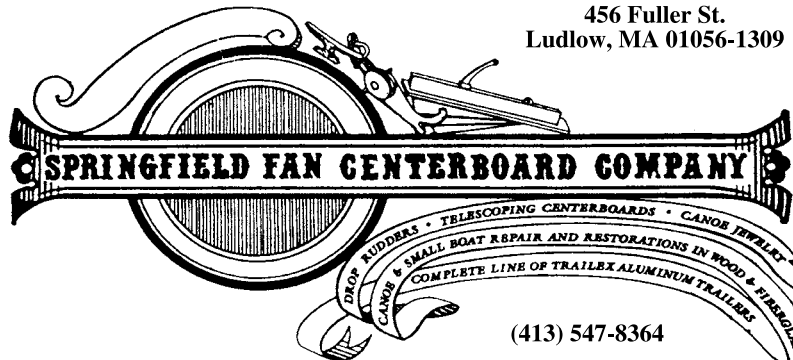
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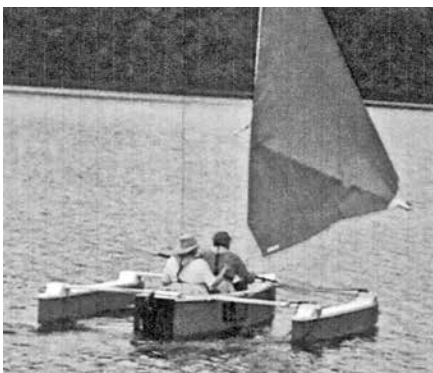
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guideboat@agbboats.com

